

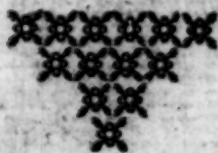
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REFLECTIONS

ON THE

RISE and PROGRESS

OF THE

BRITISH CONSTITUTION.



L O N D O N :

Printed in the Year MDCCLXI.

RELATIONS

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The book is a valuable one, and a contribution to the study of the interests of the people, as well as their temper and manners. It is written by a man of high ability, and is one of the best of its kind. It is published by the New York and London, and is one of the best of its kind. It is published by the New York and London, and is one of the best of its kind.

P R E F A C E.

AS experience is the surest guide in the conduct of private life; so with respect to public affairs, the lights most to be depended upon, are those received from History. For this reason, that study has been peculiarly recommended to princes; because therein, they may trace events to their sources, and learn the true causes, from whence nations become weak or powerful, miserable or happy. These observations arising from History, are counsellors that never flatter, and furnish lessons of policy, that seldom or never deceive.

The body politic, like the natural body, has a constitution of its own; and for this reason the interests of every great people, as well as their temper and manners, their forces and abilities, are most certainly to be learned from their own Histories. These, in shewing the

past and present state of things, the revolutions that have happened, the consequences that have attended them, and the perpetual connection between causes and events, through a long series of time, enable the penetrating peruser from a cautious contemplation of what is past, to form a true judgment of what may be expected in times to come.

But the study of any History in this view, and more especially of the British History, requires not only great quickness and much sagacity, but also a very serious application. He who would make a right use of it, in this respect, must not altogether depend upon old Chronicles, or later Histories, but must likewise have recourse to our Statutes, and to our Records; where he will frequently find things stated in a very different light, from that in which they are commonly represented; and which is of far greater consequence, will see them in their true light; which is absolutely necessary, in order to form a right conception of them.

*By taking pains in this retrospect, the real causes may be learned of all those surprising turns and amazing changes, with which our
History*

P R E F A C E.

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History abounds. From the consideration of them, we may discern how that august and regular structure of our political constitution was gradually raised and formed by a spirit of Liberty, the true genius of the British Nation, not without great struggles, and overcoming many difficulties, to what we now see it. A beauteous and stupendous edifice! which those who understand it best, will most admire.

What is singularly remarkable, and really admirable, in our present constitution, is that harmony and regularity, which appears in all its parts; notwithstanding it was so long in construction, and the building carried on by such different hands. Our civil rights clearly defined, and most effectually settled; the crown possessed of all the power it needs, and the subject of all the liberty that he can enjoy, Our religion, nearest to the form of primitive Christianity, fixed on the solid basis of universal charity. Property so secure, that no man has any temptation to hide it, or any just reason to deter him from employing it as he thinks most fit for his private interest. Hence the extent of our commerce, hence the advantages we derive from an unshaken credit; and hence that steady, equal, and yet rapid

rapid circulation, which the combination of all these produce. We may therefore safely conclude, without superstition or enthusiasm, this to be the special effects of Providence; and the rather, when we look up to a Sovereign, so gracious and so well disposed, that the contemplation of his people's happiness, is that from which he expects his own.

R E F L E C -

REFLECTIONS

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I.

THE true and essential difference between a despotic and a free government, lies in this; that in the former, the interest of the Prince only is considered, and consequently his will is the law; whereas in the latter, the welfare of the whole is the object; and of course, the sentiments of the whole to be regarded. Hence arises that respect, which in every free government, ought to be had for the voice of the people, against which as it is not safe, so it is also very imprudent to act, whenever it is clearly and properly expressed.

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But the higher the reverence due to the voice of the people, the greater the danger is, in mistaking it. For this voice is a thing very different from clamour, it is founded in reason, it corresponds with truth, and is uttered with perspicuity and in a proper manner. If unaccompanied by these circumstances, instead of being as in reality it is, the great guide and strongest support of government, it would create continual discord, and produce irremediable confusion.

A few artful and designing men, by scattering plausible propositions, and giving a colour to them, by either feigned or exaggerated facts, may easily excite jealousies of the honestest men, and raise murmurs against the wisest and best concerted measures. An administration would be very unhappy indeed, in which these murmurs should be mistaken for the voice of the people, as by the help of a little management, the whispers of the seditious, might be thus converted into the oracle of public opinion.

Foreigners however may be easily misled by such contrivances, more especially if such murmurs happen to quadrate with their views. They will immediately give them all the credit, and lend them all the authority, in their power. They will publish them with the utmost ostentation and boast for their own purposes, that the sense of the nation is directly opposite to the sense of its governors, which however false in
itself,

itself, will affect the credit and cause of the nation abroad, and may be attended with consequences easier to be conceived, than fit to be described.

By the same means the Prince himself may be deceived, and which is of all others the greatest public misfortune, be brought to have wrong ideas of the interests and inclinations of his people. By the wisdom of our ancestors, the constitution of this kingdom is so framed, that nothing of this kind can ever happen. The people have the free choice of their representatives, and consequently the power of making their real sentiments understood. The nobility, who, by their high birth and extensive property, have so great a weight with, and so large a stake in the public, speak their own minds; and consequently a monarch, who listens to both these, runs no hazard of being imposed upon, or of being drawn into measures inconsistent with the welfare of his subjects.

II. THE greatest blessing divine Providence can bestow upon this country, is a King well acquainted with, and well inclined to our excellent constitution. Such a monarch, must see his own happiness bound up in that of his subjects, and will therefore never permit the one to be promoted at the expence of the other; on the contrary, he will have his eyes constantly fixed upon its proper object, the good of the people,

people, and will derive his private satisfaction, from the pursuit and enjoyment of public felicity.

A prince of this disposition, will consider the system of our government, not as the measure, but as the support of his authority. He will never labour to extend his power, because he will never feel it limited; he will find an obedience, that force can never produce; he will be so sensible from thence of the happiness of his own situation, as never to entertain a thought, of altering it; and will be more jealous of the vigour of the constitution, than of his own prerogative.

The Peers under such a prince, will be considered as his noble and natural counsellors, of whose honour and independence he will be always tender, and constantly attentive to the maintaining their dignity, as an emanation of his own. He will therefore call for their advice willingly, receive it chearfully, and pursue it steadily, as proceeding from men whom their birth, their rank, and their property, have raised above all temptations, and whose hopes can have no objects, but the good of their country, and the favour of their king.

He will look upon the Commons of Britain, as a free and great people, and who in that capacity, send their representatives in parliament, to speak their sentiments, and to grant such supplies, as his measures taken for their welfare may

may require. It will be natural for him therefore, to desire that they may have no bias whatever on their choice, as that must be derogatory to their freedom, and to the honour and interest of his government, of course. His propositions will need no such bias, and consequently being needless, it would be without excuse.

It is a great truth, which can never be too often inculcated, or too strongly impressed on the minds of men, that a sound head is absolutely requisite, to the health and vigour of the body politic. When that is free from diseases, arts and artifices will be equally improper and inexpedient, all things will go on regularly, harmoniously, and systematically. Our government will then like a self-moving machine, proceed without trouble, and with the smallest possible expence; while all degrees of people reap the benefits of this easy and placid motion, to the continuance of which, they will willingly contribute in their respective stations, and for their own sakes.

III. IN order to support the assertion laid down, that a greater blessing cannot happen to this country, than having a King well informed in, and well inclined to, our constitution; the best proof that can be offered, is that of facts; for tho' nothing can be more reasonable, than this position simply considered, yet as our general histories represent only great and glaring events, so the wars and conquests, the political revolutions,

tions in the rise and fall of ministers, and the leagues with foreign princes, are much more insisted upon in them, than things of a more placid, and yet not less important nature.

To begin then with Henry the First, who, not without justice, was surnamed the Learned, for he was well acquainted with the Saxon laws, and with the import of his people's wishes; he consulted his own honour and their satisfaction, in declaring the pleasure it gave him, that he was the first of his line, who was their countryman by birth; he promised to relieve them from all their harsh laws, that had been made by his predecessor, and to restore those of Edward the Confessor. He promised, and he kept his word; he further assured them, that he would adhere entirely to the English, make their welfare his perpetual study, and never suffer himself to be conducted by Norman counsels; he was steady in the support of these assurances, he abolished those rigorous constitutions that had been made in the former reigns, he revived the old mild mode of government, and his new laws, were in favour of liberty and of his subjects.

Edward the First, who had been regularly educated at Oxford, tho' called early into the field, and forced to fight for his father's crown, before he was himself entitled to wear it; yet was no less distinguished for his prudence, than his prowess. He formed great designs, shewed his genius in devising the proper means of accomplishing

complishing them ; and when he entered on the execution of his plan, proceeded vigorously and with an invincible intrepidity. He meditated the union of all the British dominions, and had almost completed it. He was equally conspicuous in the camp, and in the cabinet ; great as a conqueror, greater still as a legislator. He gave form and consistency to our laws. The book called *Fleta*, is a proof of it ; and his character is justly depicted in the preface ; for to him that character belongs. He placed the purse effectually in the power of the people, by a law supplementary to the *Magna Charta*, by which it was enacted, That no taxes should be levied upon them, but by their own consent. He was singularly happy, in retaining his parts and power, to the very last ; dying as great a king as he lived, the father of justice, and of his people ; whose affections followed him to the grave, and their lamentations beyond it.

His grandson Edward the Third, is the last that shall be mentioned. In the prime of his life, he was the greatest prince of the age in which he lived ; and indeed, whether we consider him in his personal or in his political capacity, as great a monarch as ever graced any age or country. His wisdom distinguished him as much as his valour ; and his laws do him no less honour than his conquests ; tho' he had two kings his prisoners at once, and afterwards three that came to visit him, from the fame of his actions. This glorious king was religious,
without

without superstition ; just and kind to his subjects, without affecting popularity ; familiar in conversation, in which however he always used great discretion ; in every distress and difficulty, had recourse to his Parliament, never questioned their power, in his greatest prosperity, but thanked them for their assistance, and exhorted them to be careful of his subjects.

Such were the princes, who fixed and established our constitution, who knowing its value, promoted its perfection ; and increasing the strength of that, borrowed from thence a power, that enabled them to triumph over all their enemies. These were princes beloved and admired while they lived, and who will live revered in the remembrance of posterity, so long as the histories subsist that record their actions.

IV. THE general representation of these three reigns so conspicuous in history, may very well serve to shew that our wisest and greatest monarchs were the best friends to liberty and the constitution : but to give the reader a more clear notion of this, it may not be improper to descend a little into particulars, and to prove by a few special instances what the prudence and goodness of these princes induced them to do for the ease, safety, and welfare of their subjects ; and, on the other hand, what the loyalty of the people enabled them to do, in return, for the service of these monarchs. It is a just remark of Mr. Locke's,

Locke's, that the best way of reading English history is, to consider the laws made by our kings in conjunction with the martial and political events in their respective reigns, which is the surest way of coming at their true characters, and at the state of the nation under their respective administrations.

The Norman conquest, and the consequences of it had shaken at least, if not subverted the very foundation of the state, insomuch that those who had strength and power called every thing, and such as had not force to preserve it could call nothing, their own. A precarious possession is next to no possession. Henry the First, by his royal edict, which was the foundation of all our charters of liberty, so much the more valuable as it came spontaneously, settled this point; he fixed the terms of knight service, regulated the succession of lands by descent, declared what relief should be paid upon a demise, and reduced the danegelt, which was the land-tax of those days, and which he levied only in time of war. Our first Edward finding things run afresh into confusion, reformed them by those wise statutes called the first, second and third Westminster, and by another act declared the method of levying and the effects of fines; but our tenures were thoroughly and effectually adjusted by Edward the Third; in whose time, as Sir Matthew Hale observes, the law of England drew very near to its meridian height.

When lands are settled and improved, they produce profits; and in the enjoyment of these likewise, men must be secured. Henry the First gave the royal sanction to wills, regulated the distribution of the effects of intestates, and appointed fairs and markets, not only for the conveniency of purchasing, but to prevent by open sales the practice of disposing of cattle, and other things taken by fraud or force. Edward the First, by his famous statute *de Tallagio non concedendo*, relinquished that power which the crown had exercised, of levying taxes at will, under colour of necessity, which Edward the Third confirmed, and devised the most proper methods for preventing and punishing any attempts of that kind.

In reference to the persons of men in every degree, the laws of Henry the First rescued them in a great measure from oppression, by restoring the Saxon mode of maintaining the public tranquillity, by pledges. He farther enacted, That no man should be confined for a crime, till the fact imputed to him was certified by a jury, from whence our grand juries arose. In the beginning of his reign, he punished even smaller crimes with great severity, by cutting off mens limbs and members; but when this had wrought its effect, he introduced punishments by fines only. After various trials to extinguish it in a milder way, he fixed the judgment of death for robbery. Edward the First mitigated punishments, but caused the laws to be executed

cuted with strictness. In the time of Edward the Third many new writs were devised, for the subjects relief, and where-ever these were found deficient, the judges were directed to frame writs, suitable to those new cases that occurred.

Thus the reader sees, what private persons of every degree, owed to the goodness and wisdom of these kings, assisted by the attention and authority of their parliaments; and how much of our present freedom, ease, and safety, is derived from their care and circumspection. In the next place we will examine what was done in respect to public concerns, and how the people of this country being released from fear and oppression, were led, assisted, and protected, in exerting their industry, for the improving their own possessions, and in making provision for their posterity.

V. THE first point in the establishment of society is the speedy, upright, and effectual distribution of justice. Henry the First restored the Saxon method of proceeding, that every man might have right at his own door, and redress from the hands of his neighbours. Edward the First, who has been stiled the English Justinian, made this matter his capital study, and pushed it very near perfection; he fixed the courts of Common-pleas, and Exchequer; he appointed judges itinerant; he punished severely those who had taken bribes, and enjoined a solemn oath to

prevent that practice ; he regulated every thing by exprefs laws ; fettled and reſtrained jurisdictions, ſo that every one might know where and how to apply, and limited the time in which ſuits in many caſes were to be brought ; he reduced the holding of parliaments into a better form, and maintained his people in their rights of free election. Edward the Third purſued his grandfather's plan, but in a milder way ; he confirmed and corroborated the great charter over and over ; liſtened readily to the petitions of the commons, and cauſed the laws that he paſſed to be drawn in a manner clear, conciſe, and concluſive.

For the encouragement of induſtry, Henry the Firſt erected many towns into corporations, which, as things were then circumſtanced, was under him and ſeveral of his ſucceſſors of great public utility. He removed all impediments to navigation in the great rivers throughout his kingdom ; he received the Flemings, whom an inundation had driven from their own country, fettled them firſt about Carlisle, afterwards removed them into Denbighſhire and Pembrokeſhire, in Wales ; where they introduced the woollen manufacture long before it has been generally thought to have flouriſhed in this iſland. Edward the Firſt, by the ſtatute of Winton and other good laws, put a ſtop to theft and robbery, and thereby obliged people to maintain themſelves by working. Edward the Third put the price of proviſions and of labour,

labour, equally under the care of the magistrate, and thereby made them both cheap, preventing monopolies in the one, and impositions in the other; he invited over and protected foreigners, not to amuse his people with strange sights, but to instruct them in new trades, and the finer sorts of the woollen manufacture; he regulated the herring-fishery by a law, and through his long reign studied to support his subjects in peace and plenty.

In respect to the trade and commerce of their dominions, it is a vulgar opinion, that these princes had little to do. But this is very ill founded. Henry the First enacted, That the same weights, measures, and money, should be used throughout his dominions. It is very probable, this was not complied with; however it shews his sense of, and attention to, things of this kind. His foreign dominions obliged him to keep up a navy, which had been impossible, without a certain proportion of commerce; and that this really existed, appears from his threatening to prohibit all intercourse with Ireland; which obliged Murchard king therein, to make an humble submission. The greatest proof of all is, that he left in his treasury one hundred thousand pounds in ready money, which is equal to thrice as much of our specie, and has been computed to be of ten times the value. Edward the First made the statute of Acton Burnel, and another to explain it, for the ease of merchants; by which laws it
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appears, that London, York, and Bristol, were then the three great marts of the realm. By his statute *de Judaismo*, he restrained the Jews from usury, which he discerned to be destructive to industry, and detrimental to commerce. He granted the first charter that is now extant, to the Cinque-ports, of which he had been warden in his father's reign, and they fitted out in his a fleet of one hundred sail. Edward the Third fixed staples as he judged most proper for the convenience of commerce, and altered them frequently at the request of his subjects. That there might be occasion for this, may appear from the exportation of wool and woollen manufactures, in the twenty-eighth year of his reign, to the value of eight hundred thousand pounds in our money. He also renewed the charter of the Cinque-ports, and was more jealous of the sovereignty of the seas, than careful of his foreign conquests.

These monarchs, in virtue of their good intentions, and the sense their people had of them, were able, which no weak princes ever can be, to give a check to exorbitant power where-ever it appeared. Henry the First punished the instruments of his predecessor's exactions, and restrained the power of his clergy and barons. Edward the First made the statute of mortmain, to prevent excessive donations to the Church; and the statute of Carlisle, to repress the influence of Churchmen. Edward the Third, by advice of parliament, passed a law for the redress

dress of Ecclesiastical grievancés, and for preventing the pope and cardinals making spoil of his subjects. Indeed it was high time; for the Church was then in possession of one third of the lands of England.

These are clear and convincing testimonies, that the principles of true policy, and the art of administering the government, so as to contribute to the general welfare of those who were its subjects, was well understood, and strictly attended to by these monarchs, who happily conciliated their own power, with the prosperity of their people. These are proofs which may teach us to look up with reverence to our ancestors, and free us in a great measure from those prepossessions we are too apt to entertain of the barbarity of past times.

VI. WE will now by way of contrast to the former, consider succinctly and in a few striking instances only, those reigns that have been most unhappy, both to kings and people, the more immediate causes of which, even the shortest recital will render obvious to the judgment of every attentive reader. Displeasing pictures these! but which nevertheless exhibit to us salutary informations, and afford us useful cautions. The truth is, that the histories of such reigns ought to be read solely in this view, that the miseries of past times may be a lesson to the present; so that by avoiding such errors as mis-led our ancestors,

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we may keep the strait road, and escape those dreadful disorders that fell on them. For causes and effects are connected by a superior power, and are not to be disjoined by the artifices of men.

Edward the Second succeeded to a father wise and great, but he succeeded when he was young, and which was worse, wanted his abilities. He recalled Peter Gaveston, who had been the companion of his juvenile riots, contrary to his own oath, exacted from him by the old king his father. He raised this favourite hastily and imprudently, which excited the jealousy, and fixed the hatred of the barons, who forced the king to drive him thrice into exile, and which was a much heavier misfortune, compelled him to delegate his royal authority to commissioners of their appointing. They still thirsted for Gaveston's blood, and they had it. They again named such counsellors as they thought fit for the king, and amongst these was Sir Hugh Spencer the younger, whom they made his chamberlain. The king took him and his father into his favour, which so far lost them both with the barons, that they raised an insurrection and compelled the king to give his assent to their banishment. Upon their being recalled, the barons again took arms to remove them. This had an unfortunate issue; for being defeated, the earl of Lancaster and many other persons of great quality, were sentenced to death, which they suffered, the king himself sitting in judgment

judgment upon that earl, tho' he was his cousin-german, and in this tide of prosperity, Edward found a parliament that cancelled all that a former parliament had done. This did not cure the aversion of the great men against the Spencers, they drew the queen to share at length in their resentments. She went over to France, procured her son to be sent after her, who was followed by her favourite Mortimer, and with this assistance, and the connivance at least of the earl of Kent, the king's only brother, came over in a hostile manner, destroyed the Spencers, deposed and then murdered the king; and afterwards with a shew of justice put to death the earl of Kent, who repenting of what he had done, endeavoured to restore him. Such was the unfortunate fate of Edward the Second! the dupe of favourites, the victim of factions, represented to his people while living, as a silly prince, and revered after his death as a royal saint.

Richard the Second, was another monarch, very like the former in his misfortunes; he was also the son of a glorious father, Edward surnamed the Black Prince, and grandson to the victorious Edward the Third; he was very young at his accession, and therefore under the tuition of his uncles, who, with other potent lords governed in his name; their power was so great, and they used it with such contempt of the commons, as excited commotions of a very unusual nature, and which were dangerous

and desperate, tho' by the signal interposition of Providence they did not prove destructive. Wat Tyler and his rabble, whose worthy purpose it was to extirpate the nobility, clergy, lawyers, and gentry, plundered the city of London, and had both the king and kingdom in their power, rescued from them by the courage of the brave lord mayor, and the king's presence of mind, tho' he was then but fifteen years of age. As the factions of the nobility left the king, without power to reduce several insurrections of the same kind by force, his sole resource was his prerogative, which he exercised by granting them general pardons, and charters of manumission. When the kingdom was thus quieted a parliament was held, in which both houses concurred in declaring those charters null and void, as extorted by violence from the king, and contrary to their interests. By the same authority a council was appointed to inspect into the revenue, and the expences of the king's government; he was also obliged to remove his two great favourites, Robert de Vere duke of Ireland, and Michael de la Pole earl of Suffolk; but affairs taking another turn, he endeavoured to exalt his prerogative, and oblige his judges to declare these endeavours legal; but his uncle the duke of Gloucester, and several others of the principal nobility having collected a sufficient force to beat the duke of Ireland, and oblige him to quit the kingdom, procured the attainder of the king's evil counsellors, and judges in parlia-

parliament ; to which the king submitted : Afterwards however, he once more obtained the ascendant, by treacherously seizing the duke of Gloucester, whom he sent over to Calais, where he was murdered ; and then procured a parliament, which not only attainted him, the earl of Arundel, and other persons of high rank, but annulled all the former statutes ; and, which was a stretch beyond any thing that had ever been done, devolved the authority of parliament upon a committee. The king believing his power to be now effectually fixed, passed over to Ireland, to quell some troubles that had arisen there. In his absence, his cousin Henry duke of Lancaster debarked in the North, and finding the nation generally discontented, marched into Wales, where the king had landed, and having got his person into his hands, obliged him to resign his crown, and soon after deprived him of life.

The wretched catastrophe of this most miserable of all our monarchs, produced the fatal disputes between the houses of York and Lancaster, which distressed and depopulated this country to such a degree, as brought it to the very verge of destruction ; a thing often said in general terms, but never properly or particularly considered.

Henry the Sixth, who was, strictly speaking, the last prince of the last mentioned line, was many years a king in name, without ever being in reality a king at all. He wore that title in

his cradle, when France made but a part of his dominions, and while a child had the crown set upon his head at Paris. He had for his guardians his uncles and other princes of the blood, men of as clear courage, as great parts, and some of them of as good intentions as that age produced. But having different interests, they drew different ways; and as there is no pursuing private advantage by the high road, so this led most of them into sinister practices. The best part of his foreign dominions were lost, before he was of age; the remainder were sacrificed to procure him a wife. From the dominion of his tutors, he fell under that of an imperious, artful, and intriguing princess, who had no idea of the welfare of this country, was bigotted to her family connections, and pursued her own views, at the expence of the king's honour and safety. This gave an opportunity to the partizans of the house of York to practise the same arts against his government, which the creatures of the house of Lancaster had excited against Richard the Second. Insurrections headed by nobody knew who, and carried on for nobody knew what. But the ferment being once raised, this scene of trouble never subsided. Sometimes one king was upon the throne, sometimes another. The parliaments of Henry the Sixth attainted the adherents of the duke of York; the parliaments of Edward the Fourth reversed these, and attainted their opponents. After a long struggle, in which
Henry

Henry was sometimes upon the throne, sometimes in the field, sometimes in exile, sometimes in a prison, his days were at last ended in the Tower, by a death of which we know little, except that it was violent. Those who honoured his memory most, would have canonized him for a saint; and those who denied him that title, were obliged by the force of truth to confess, that he was an innocent. Few kings have had more virtues, and hardly any man was freer from vices.

VII. IT has been already remarked, with great truth, that most of the causes of those heavy calamities, which this nation suffered under these reigns, must be obvious to every reader; yet, because these were public calamities, which crushed and bore down all ranks and degrees of people, it is but reasonable, that we should look a little more closely into the seeds and sources of these miseries. We shall upon such an inspection find, that they were the very same in every one of the reigns; so that it is impossible we should fall into any mistake about them. It will set the malignity of these causes in so full a light, that we shall equally cease to doubt and to wonder at their consequences, because we shall be convinced, that in whatever age or country these poisonous plants are found, they will ever be productive of the same bitter fruits. To this we may add, that if such a political lecture could have been safely
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wrote or read, in those sad times, it might have prevented their recurring so often. But alas ! while these evils subsisted, the describing them had been the most perilous of all attempts ; and the best intention in the world, would not have preserved from ruin, such a public spirited discoverer.

The first and leading cause, was the immense estates and prodigious power of the barons ; who, in effect, were so many princes ; and when many of these were combined together, by interest, ambition, or resentment, the crown had very seldom strength sufficient to resist them. In order to give the reader a clear idea of this, we must observe, that some of them were possessed of more than one hundred rich and spacious manors ; which, by the nature of their tenures, equally enabled them to disturb the government, or to defend it. In the reign of Edward the Second, Thomas earl of Lancaster retained two thousand men at arms ; and the earls of Lincoln and Warwick, and others of the nobility, were little inferior to him in power. When the two Spencers applied to parliament, for reversing the sentence of their banishment, Hugh the elder, set forth, that the great men who had compelled the king to yield to that sentence, had destroyed thirteen of his manors in Wiltshire, and as many more in other counties as amounted to sixty-three ; besides driving away twenty-eight thousand sheep, twenty-two thousand black cattle, six hundred horses

horses and mares ; spoiling also two crops ; one in the barn and the other on the ground, to the value in the whole of thirty thousand pounds. Hugh, the son, in his petition, represented to the like effect ; except, that he stated his damages only at two thirds of those of his father.

In the reign of Richard the Second, the dukes of Lancaster, Gloucester, and York, all princes of the blood, had prodigious estates ; as had also the earls of Warwick, Arundel, Suffolk, and several others ; so that the king's authority frequently gave way to their power, and whenever he had an ascendancy, it was in consequence of his gaining several of them to his party. In the nonage of Henry the Sixth, his uncle the duke of Bedford, was regent of France ; his uncle the duke of Gloucester, protector of his person, and of the realm of England ; while his cousin the duke of York, governed Ireland ; neither were there wanting many other grandees, who were extremely potent, and who seldom resorted to parliament without six or eight hundred retainers, who wore their badges, and were ready to execute their commands, of whatever nature they might be.

The birth, power, and influence of these great lords, made them extremely haughty, and naturally involved them in quarrels with each other ; from whence, in truth, most of our civil broils sprung. In the time of Edward the Second, Lacy earl of Lincoln bequeathed his

his quarrel with Gaveston, upon his death-bed, to the earl of Lancaster, his son-in-law. The earl of Surry had a spite to that earl of Lancaster, which induced him to spirit up one of her gallants, to carry away his wife. The original source of the clamour against the Spencers, was their purchasing an estate, which lay very conveniently for two or three other grandees. The whole reign of Richard the Second was disturbed and distracted with such kind of feuds, which dropped and were revived as these great men changed sides. His uncle John of Gaunt duke of Lancaster, served as high-steward in that parliament, which attainted the duke of Gloucester, the earl of Arundel, and their adherents; and that monarch's immediate ruin proceeded from a quarrel between the dukes of Hereford and Norfolk, the former of them succeeding upon his deposition, by the title of Henry the Fourth. In the nonage of Henry the Sixth, his uncle the duke of Gloucester quarrelled with his other uncle the cardinal of Winchester, which was the first great cause of dissension. The next was, a quarrel between Gloucester and Suffolk. Then the dukes of York and Suffolk were embroiled: and then the discord between the dukes of York and Somerset rose so high, as to excite a civil war, and a decisive action in the field.

As these altercations frequently arose about trifles; and, by a gradual accession of parties, swelled at length into factions of state, so which
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ever side was victorious, we find them always cruel ; and as they were conscious that the law could not be strained to justify such acts of revenge, they gratified their malice frequently, at the expence not only of their enemies lives, but also of the constitution. Thus the earl of Warwick put Gaveston to death illegally, and in breach of the promise that had been made him when he surrendered. Hugh Spencer the elder, earl of Winchester, and at the time of his decease ninety years of age, had sentence passed upon him, but without a trial, and was embowelled alive. In king Richard's time, the duke of Gloucester was smothered at Calais, attainted after he was dead upon an extorted confession ; and the earl of Arundel executed by a law *ex post facto*, without being called to answer properly before his peers. In Henry the Sixth's reign, his uncle the duke of Gloucester was foully murdered by the queen's adherents at St. Edmondsbury. The duke of Suffolk, who had a great hand in that business, being banished, was taken at sea by the captain of a small vessel, and had his head stricken off on the side of the boat. The duke of Somerset fell in battle, fighting on the king his master's side, but in his own quarrel ; and, not long after, the duke of York lost his life, in the battle of Wakefield, after which his younger son Edmund was barbarously murdered in cold blood by the lord Clinton. Such was the spirit, or rather the fury, of those times!

VIII. A SECOND cause of these disorders, so destructive to the kingdom, was the immense revenue, the extensive influence, and the turbulent disposition of Churchmen. In the reign of Edward the Second, Walter Reynolds, a great courtier, whom the king had made bishop of Worcester, treasurer, and chancellor of England, and, at length, with some degree of violence, archbishop of Canterbury; when the king brought Dr. Tarleton, bishop of Hereford, before a court of justice for high-treason, this archbishop, accompanied by his brethren of York and Dublin, and many other prelates, with their crosses borne before them, came and took him away by force; and afterwards this archbishop, unmindful of former obligations, deserted the king in his distress. Dr. Adam de Orleton or Tarleton before-mentioned, took care to justify the king's suspicions of him, by the violence with which he drove on the succeeding troubles, by his sermon to maintain the lawfulness of deposing, by his treatment of the king, when sent to him under his misfortunes, and by the counsel he gave his keepers who were afterwards his murderers, for which he was raised successively to the sees of Worcester and Winchester. Dr. Henry Burghersh, bishop of Lincoln, was another prelate of the same stamp, and equally busy in this affair, from personal resentment. Dr. Walter Stapleton, bishop of Exeter, and treasurer of England, was

was beheaded by the populace, for his fidelity to his master; and Dr. Robert Baldock, archdeacon of Middlesex, and elect of Norwich, a privy counsellor, was so ill used by the mob in his passage to Newgate, that he died of his bruises.

In the time of Richard the Second, there happened a great misunderstanding between that prince and Richard Fitz-Alan, commonly called Arundel, archbishop of Canterbury, brother to the potent earl of Arundel, whose cause he warmly espoused. This prelate, leaving the kingdom under a charge of high-treason, returned again with Henry duke of Hereford, and was the principal instrument in raising him to the throne. Richard Scroop brother to the earl of Wiltshire, and himself archbishop of York, espousing the cause of this unfortunate monarch, when it was too late, was taken, tried, sentenced, and beheaded, under the reign of Henry the Fourth. Within this period also lived Henry Spencer, the heroic bishop of Norwich, who having changed the temporal for the spiritual sword, of a soldier became a bishop; he, in the times of these dangerous commotions of the commons, with the assistance only of a few gentlemen, drawn to him by his reputation for military skill, routed a numerous body of them in Norfolk, under one Luttrell, whom they stiled their king, and effectually suppressed them. Two years afterwards, at the command of pope Urban VI. he levied at an

immense expence to the nation, a numerous army against the anti-pope Clement VII. which he transported into the Low-Countries ; where, after slaying thousands of people, laying waste a great tract of land, and burning the towns of Gravelin, Nieuport, and Dunkirk, he returned to England.

Under the reign of Henry the Sixth, his uncle Henry Beaufort, cardinal bishop of Winchester, was so rich as to lend large sums, in a case of public necessity, upon the jewels of the crown, and afterwards on a mortgage of the revenue ; and had such an influence in parliament, as to defeat the designs of his brother, the duke of Gloucester. Dr. Adam Molins, bishop of Chichester, was in great credit with the king, who raised him to the post of lord privy seal ; in this station, he was sent to discharge the seamen at Portsmouth, who being in an ill temper, and their passions artfully irritated by the enemies of the king and bishop, he was there murdered. George Nevil, brother to the famous earl of Warwick, was advanced by his credit to the bishoprick of Exeter, when he was under twenty years of age, by the favour of that monarch ; who was nevertheless deposed, in consequence of a sermon preached by him at Paul's Cross, in which he declared the title of Edward duke of York to the crown. By this king he was made chancellor, before he was twenty-five ; and at the age of thirty, exalted to the archiepiscopal see of York ; but being
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seduced to follow the faction of his brother, he revolted from, and seized the person of king Edward; who, afterwards making his escape, surprized this archbishop with king Henry his master in London, and sent them both to the Tower; whence he was indeed released, but was so severely plundered, that the vexation it gave him broke his heart.

IX. A THIRD, and still greater evil, arose from the combination of the two former; and this was the abuse^v of the authority of parliament. We have seen in what has been said of preceding reigns, what mighty advantages were derived to the nation, from those assemblies in which the concerns of the public were maturely weighed, where propositions from the crown were fairly debated, where the grievances felt by the people were freely represented, and where statutes made by the consent of the legislature settled the power of the sovereign on the soundest basis, and provided for the ease and happiness of the subject in the most effectual manner. By these assemblies the jurisdiction of the respective courts of justice was assigned, the method of their proceedings settled, and the transgressions of such as failed in doing their duty, were enquired into and punished. Here wholesome laws for preserving property, promoting industry, encouraging trade, preventing frauds, and reforming abuses of every kind, were enacted; and proper care taken, that they should

should be carried into execution. Such were the blessings derived from parliaments, which intitled them not only to the obedience, but to the reverence of the people. We shall now endeavour to explain, how they came to be considered in quite another light.

In the beginning of the reign of Edward the Second, a council was established to keep the power of the crown within bounds, and Gaveston was sent into exile. After the great men had taken and put him to death, there was a parliament held in the fifth year of that monarch, to which the potent nobility resorted, with many hundreds of their retainers in arms, notwithstanding the king's letters of inhibition; and, in this parliament, tho' they made a formal submission to the king, upon which a seeming reconciliation ensued, yet he had again a council of their naming placed about him, and the lords of this council were impowered to make ordinances for the government of his household and his revenue. In another parliament held at York, in the twelfth year of his reign, the Spencers were banished upon articles exhibited against them, to which they were not called to answer; a council again appointed, with the addition of a baron or banneret, of the household of the earl of Lancaster, who were to direct the management of public affairs. This was stiled the parliament of the White Bands, from the distinction worn by the retainers of the great lords. In the parliament, which met at the

the same place in the fifteenth of this reign, after the great insurrection, for which the earl of Lancaster and others lost their lives, the proceedings against the Spencers were annulled, as against law; in proof of which it was urged, that the lords spiritual protested against them at the time the earl of Lancaster and his adherents were attainted, and the king was freed from the hardships of which he complained. In a parliament which sat the next year, Tarleton bishop of Hereford was accused of high-treason, but refused to answer there. Being afterwards brought to the bar of the King's-bench, he was, as we before observed, taken from thence, by the archbishop. However, a bill being found against him in Herefordshire, the king seized his temporalities, which brought on his own ruin.

The mischief of parliaments under influence appeared more conspicuously in the reign of Richard the Second. In his fourth year, a parliament sat; which, for the support of the war against France, the maintaining a suitable strength at sea, and other national measures, found themselves under the greatest difficulties in levying no larger a sum than one hundred thousand pounds. One third of this they threw upon the clergy, as being possessed of one third of the lands; and for the remaining sum of little more than sixty-six thousand pounds, they settled a poll-tax of three groats for every male and female in the kingdom, above the age of fifteen;

fifteen; those that were in better circumstances, to help such as were less able; and particularly provided, that no member of their own house should be a collector of this tax, which being very grievous, excited those popular commotions, which were very near destroying the king and constitution. The great lords having made an insurrection, and Henry earl of Derby, afterwards Henry the Fourth, having beat the duke of Ireland and the king's forces at Radcot-Bridge, the parliament held in the eleventh year of this king's reign, being entirely at their devotion, enacted that the king should grant a commission to certain lords of their naming, who were thereby in effect vested with royal authority; attainted the judges, for having given their opinions, when forced to it by the king and his ministers; executed Sir Robert Tresilian, chief justice; banished the rest of the judges to Ireland; took an oath to abide by the five lords appellants, against the duke of Ireland and other evil counsellors; obliged the king to renew his coronation oath; declared every sentence they had passed, to have the force of a statute; obliged the peers and commons to swear, that they should be for ever kept; and enjoined the like oath to be taken, by all gentlemen and dignified clergy, through all the counties in England, as also all mayors, aldermen, &c. and for this purpose a writ in the king's name was sent to every sheriff. The severity of these proceedings procured that assembly

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sembly the title of the Unmerciful Parliament. When Richard the Second had seized his uncle the duke of Gloucester, sent him to Calais, and caused him there to be put to death, he, by tampering with the sheriffs, procured a parliament to his mind; which met at Westminster in the twenty-first of his reign, in which Sir John Bushy was the speaker of the House of Commons, who impeached Dr. Arundel archbishop of Canterbury, and others, of high-treason; when their pardon being annulled, as obtained by force and violence; the earls of Arundel and Warwick were attainted, by judgment of their peers, John of Gaunt duke of Lancaster, sitting as lord high-steward. The first of the two earls was executed, and the latter banished to the Isle of Man. The archbishop also was condemned of treason, the proctor for the clergy assenting; and, according to the precedent before-mentioned, the clergy were sworn to maintain the statutes and judgments given in this parliament; and seven dukes, eight earls, and twenty-one barons took a like oath; the prelates likewise pronounced a sentence of excommunication, against such as should openly or secretly, by deed, counsel or advice, contravene any of the aforesaid premises. This parliament being prorogued to Shrewsbury, annulled the proceedings against the judges, repealed and made void the acts made in the parliament of the eleventh of the king; and many things of importance being left to be done, they de-

volved the power of parliament on the king, twelve peers, and six commoners. All these exorbitant acts are entirely charged upon the king, in the articles exhibited against him in that parliament called in his name, and in which he was deprived of his crown and dignity.

Under the reign of Henry the Sixth things passed pretty well in parliament, while the king's three uncles were living, tho' there was no very good understanding amongst them. But, after the death of the duke of Bedford, matters took a very different turn, and factions alternately prevailed. In the parliament held at Westminster, which began in the twenty-third of that monarch's reign, in which William Burley, Esq; was speaker, and which was continued by several prorogations; the chancellor in the name of all the lords, in the presence of the king, protested that the peace which the king had made with the French king, was of his own motion and will, and not by the instigation of any. It was likewise enacted, that a statute made in the reign of Henry the Fifth, by which no such peace could be made, without the consent of the states of England and France first obtained, was revoked; and it was farther enacted, that no person should at any time thereafter, be impeached for advising that peace. This was to support a vote of the commons, in favour of the marquis and earl of Suffolk; and at their request it was enacted, that

that he should be held for a most true and faithful subject. In a parliament held in the twenty-fifth year of the same prince, at Bury, where the queen and her friends had an armed force, Humphrey duke of Gloucester was arrested, and murdered while in custody; of which that assembly took not the least notice, but passed a law to bar his widow of her dower. In the parliament of the twenty-eighth, Sir John Popham being speaker, the duke of Suffolk was impeached, for selling the nation to France; and, by the interposition of the king, he was banished for five years. In the twenty-ninth, Sir William Oldhall being speaker, the commons gave a list of the king's principal courtiers, and demanded that they should be banished the king's presence, during their lives, and not come within twelve miles of the court, because people spoke ill of them. In the thirty-first, the duke of York was declared protector of the realm in parliament, which implied the king's incapacity to govern. In his thirty-third year the duke of York and his allies were solemnly acquitted in parliament, for any harms done at the time of their meeting with the king at St. Albans. This meeting was the battle fought there, in which the duke of Somerset and other persons of high rank were slain, and the king's forces defeated. In the same parliament, the duke of York was again made protector, with his protest, that it was not at his own desire, but at the request of the lords and

commons. However, at the close of the parliament, he was by the king's writ, with their consent, deposed from that high office. In the parliament held at Coventry in the thirty-eighth of this king, the duke and all his adherents were attainted. In this parliament it was enacted, that such knights as were returned to parliament, by virtue of the king's letters, without any other election, should be good; and the sheriffs incur no legal penalties for returning them. In a parliament held the very next year, all the acts, statutes, and ordinances, made in the parliament at Coventry, were reversed; because that parliament was unlawfully summoned, and the knights and burgessees unduly chosen. In this parliament, Richard duke of York was declared heir apparent to the crown, and was publicly proclaimed so.

It is observed by Rapin, that parliaments always sided with the strongest; but if he had distinguished what parliaments they were, his observation would have been so much the plainer. The exorbitant power of the barons and clergy, frequently enabled them to influence those assemblies, and then it was no wonder that the barons parliaments should be for the barons. When kings had the ascendancy, they made use likewise of their influence. This appears clearly from the matters of fact before-mentioned, and mentioned for this purpose only, that it may be rendered evident the safety, peace and prosperity of these nations, depends
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on the having a free, unbiaſſed parliament. It muſt give every honeſt man pleaſure, to reflect, when he looks back on theſe ſeaſons of tempeſt and confuſion, that we are not only releaſed from them, but releaſed from the fear of falling into them again; that we live in ſettled and compoſed times, when the conſtitution has emerged from all theſe difficulties; and when, inſtead of military tenures, and ſuch a power in the nobility as rendered them princes, we have a known and eſta bliſhed form of rule, government founded on laws, and in which the legiſlature is ſo clearly defined, that no room is left for diſputes about it.

X. WHOEVER will review our Engliſh hiſtory attentively, muſt plainly perceive, from the death of Edward the Third to the battle of Stoke-field, in which fell John earl of Lincoln, who had been once declared the heir of the houſe of York, that is for more than one hundred years, there had been a continued ſeries of popular commotions, private conſpiracies, or open civil wars; ſo that the national quiet was continually diſturbed, the due adminiſtration of government hindered, the allegiance of the ſubject uncertain, and of courſe unſettled, the law enfeebled, no authority permanent, when unsupported by force; and what was the genuine fruit of ſuch grievous calamities, an exceeding decay, or rather an utter extinction of public ſpirit. Inſtead of fixing their eyes upon the
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general welfare, men kept nothing in view, but their private advantage; and vainly thought to accumulate riches, to establish power, and to lay the foundation of great families, in the midst of clamour and confusion. How little this succeeded, and how deeply all ranks and degrees of people were distressed, our histories sufficiently shew, and our records still more incontestably prove.

We have seen, that Richard the Second, at the very beginning of his reign, and when it could have been procured by no act of his own, was miserably poor. His successor Henry the Fourth, almost at his entrance upon government, was in such necessity as to be obliged to pledge the silver plate, that his father brought from Spain. Henry the Fifth, in the conquest of France, exhausted England; and had the joy resulting from his stupendous victories im-bittered, by the continual complaints of his subjects. His son Henry the Sixth, was perpetually in difficulties, and in debt; and partly through the expences of his wars, but more through the ill management of his ministers, brought the whole revenue of his crown so low, as five thousand pounds a year. Edward the Fourth, in spite of all that he acquired by attainders and resumptions, was ever craving the assistance of his subjects, and promising that he would retrench and live upon his own. Richard the Third was frugal; but his reign was short, and yet never free from troubles. There were
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indeed in several of those reigns, some short cessations of disturbance, in which their courts appeared in splendour; but these gleams of prosperity were quickly clouded and overcast, so that all of them were more sensible of the cares and anxieties, than of the pleasures and prerogatives that attended their high station.

The potent houses of our nobility, who by their feuds and factions were the principal instruments of all this misery, felt a large share of it themselves; and, either by slaughtering each other in the field, or by concurring to bring the unfortunate to the punishment due to criminals, at last plunged their families into such scenes of danger, as either made it expedient for them to seek safety in foreign countries, or to hide themselves in obscure places, and under borrowed names, in their own. The prelates and superior clergy, who, in more settled times, were safe from the law, and could shelter themselves from the power and even the justice of their sovereigns, by claiming privileges and immunities granted to the church, were not able to save themselves from the hands of the rabble, but were frequently and barbarously murdered in popular commotions. These insurrections of the commons, which were equally fatal and furious, produced the ruin of several great cities, and, more than once, threatened the metropolis with destruction. In these, and in the subsequent civil wars, many fair houses were subverted, and the improvements made by the industry

dustry of former times, rashly and rudely overthrown, while the necessary culture of the land was so neglected, that several severe famines ensued. In the mean time, the trade and commerce of the nation, which had rose to a great height before those troubles began, sunk extremely low; and what little was left, fell chiefly into the hands of foreigners. Richard the Second, who married the daughter of the emperor Charles the Fourth, had been extremely kind to the merchants of the Steelyard, who paid their customs beforehand; and who, whenever they wanted favours, supported their petition by money. Their success brought over other foreigners, who commonly applied themselves to merchandise, usury, or slight manufactures; by which they speedily attained riches, and then withdrew into other countries, where they might enjoy their wealth with greater safety. This, tho' the natural and necessary consequence of their own discords and negligence, provoked the natives of this country extremely, and induced them as often as opportunity offered to endeavour to correct this malady by laws, as may be seen in many of our statutes, and in one particularly, enacted in the reign of Richard the Third. But laws, tho' well meant, could do little in this respect, while the people were restless and unruly; more ready to run together in riots, than to pursue any honest occupation; and heedless of that wretched condition, into which their own ill conduct, for

so long a tract of time, had reduced the fairest and pleasantest island in Europe.

We have seen how the country was depopulated and destroyed, the nation brought into the most distressed circumstances, and the constitution almost shaken to pieces. It certainly required a man of great genius, great steadiness, and great good fortune, as well as a reasonable space of time to bring things once more into order, to induce the people to have a right sense of the benefits resulting from such a change, and to place it on so sound a basis, as might render it secure and permanent, not liable to be easily shaken, and incapable of a total subversion. This was the work of Henry the Seventh, whom if we may be allowed so to speak, Providence appointed to this arduous task, and endowed him with the abilities that were requisite to accomplish it.

As he was born with a very distant, if indeed any expectation of a crown, so he gradually acquired the talents that rendered him worthy to wear it; and he acquired them, as they must be acquired, by industry and indefatigable application. It does not appear that his education was extraordinary, but any defects there might be in that, he supplied by his own pains, being always assiduous in the study of what it imported him to know, and intent from his youth upon understanding his own business. This was so far from rendering him unapt to receive advice, that it convinced him of the ne-

cessity of seeking and hearing it patiently, and taught him to behave very obligingly to those whom he consulted. He was no less active than diligent, was as forward as any in the field when it was necessary, tho' he never acted suddenly, or without digesting things well in council. In a word, he was brave, without being fierce; grave and wise, without any pedantic affectation; as he was very courteous and familiar, without departing from his dignity.

Fortitude of mind enabled him to overcome all those obstacles, that otherwise had barred his passage to the throne. He shewed such a spirit in sustaining his misfortunes, as gained him many friends abroad, and kept such as attached themselves to his interests, steady at home. His difficultjes were not terminated by the battle which procured him the crown; on the contrary, they multiplied and increased, becoming so much the greater, as they were sometimes very near his person. His resolution was never shaken, so as to heighten dangers by an appearance of apprehension; neither was it rashness or confidence, that led him to undervalue them. He considered them silently, proceeded in his preparations with the greatest prudence, but always made it his choice to meet them, and often dissipated his enemies by his presence, sometimes by the very rumour of his approach. His firmness was not at all more conspicuous in the field, than in the cabinet; he was slow in taking his measures; but when

he had taken them, he was never to be diverted. He knew better than others what inconveniences might possibly attend them; he knew also the remedies that might be applied, and was therefore never to be frightened from his purpose, which was the reason that he accomplished whatever he undertook.

He had great sagacity in judging of men, as appears by his choice of his generals, and his ministers; who were the support of his government, and whom therefore he always supported, treated as his companions, promoted them highly, and rewarded them nobly. Sir Reginald Bray had been superintendant of the affairs of his mother, the countess of Richmond; and when he could no longer stay safely in England, followed his fortunes abroad. At his return, the king made him banneret, and afterwards knight of the garter; gave him a place in his privy council, and always heard his remonstrances with mildness and patience; for Sir Reginald knew nothing of reason of state, but maintained an integrity at court, which is applauded, rather than practised in schools and convents. Sir John Cheyney, who served him gallantly at Bosworth, and upon many other occasions, he created a peer, and honoured with the garter. To Dr. John Morton, Bishop of Ely, he gave the custody of the great seal; raised him to the see of Canterbury, and procured him a hat from Rome. Dr. Richard Fox, whom he found in an obscure condition at Vannes in Bretagne, in

consideration of his merit and services, he made first his secretary, and of his council; then lord privy seal, and successively bishop of Exeter, Bath and Wells, Durham, and Winchester. Dr. Christopher Ursewicke, whom he sent eleven times with a public character to foreign princes, he made his almoner, dean of York and Windsor, and would have promoted him to a bishoprick, if he had not declined it, and chose rather a private station; where he lived respected by the great, beloved by the people, and happy in the universal esteem of all who knew him. In a reign of almost twenty-four years this monarch never disgraced a minister, or removed a servant, except his chamberlain, who was convicted of treason.

He had a wonderful calmness of temper, which not only enabled him to curb and conceal, but also to govern and to correct his passions, so that they hurt not either his interest or his reputation. He was extremely circumspect even in his minutest actions, which has exposed him to the censure of some, as if he had been over-cautious; but this rests wholly in conjecture, whereas it is out of doubt, that he was never surprised or over-reached. His genius was very comprehensive, so that he dealt not in expedients, took no hasty steps that were to serve a present turn, but held the consequence of his measures always in view, and was at great pains to achieve many things, which could be only beneficial to posterity.

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He had spent many years abroad, and was well acquainted with foreign princes, and the customs of their courts ; but this was far from giving him a bias in favour of foreigners ; nor do we find that he adopted any of their fashions, except the establishing a small guard for the security of his person. Those who blame him for not marrying the heiress of Bretagne, make him a great compliment ; since if he had done it, he must have broke his faith, and have entailed a War upon the nation, merely to aggrandize his own family. His great expedition to France has been condemned as a mercenary scheme, to put an immense sum of money into his coffers ; but if we consider, that this expedition procured a lasting and honourable peace, with a constant annual tribute during his reign, and after, we shall conceive it more salutary and successful, than if he had burdened his subjects with the maintenance of expensive provinces, the error of former princes, and into which his son afterwards ran. The truth is, he treated most of the potentates of Europe, as they have since treated us ; he took care to have a clear insight into their projects, while his own were kept in the dark. Hence it was, that even in his life-time they held him in greater reverence, than his own subjects ; and his conduct is still more celebrated by foreign authors, than by the writers of our own nation.

It is not to be denied, that as this king had great virtues and many shining qualities, so he
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had also great vices, and some very dark and crooked purposes. His conduct was governed rather by political, than religious or moral maxims; and yet he founded monasteries, and bestowed very large sums of money in alms. The putting the unhappy earl of Warwick to death, is not to be excused; or his avarice and oppression, more especially in the latter part of his life, to be palliated; tho' when he had a mind to be magnificent, expence stood not in his way; as appeared by the grand apartment he built at Windsor, and from the noble chapel erected by him at Westminster, which was the wonder of his own times, and continues to be so of ours. It is not intended to write an apology for, much less a panegyric upon him; all that is designed, is to give a true representation of his character, that by knowing the workman thoroughly we may judge the better of his work. He was certainly a wise prince; for he was successful in all his actions, through prudence, and not by chance. Power was his great object, and he possessed it through his whole reign, without being controuled by any faction. He made the basis of his power the prosperity of his subjects; for he knew that a monarch could not be rich or great, that ruled over a poor, oppressed, and of course discontented people. Upon these principles he undertook to restore in some respects, to reform in others, and in many to improve our constitution.

XI. HENRY the Seventh, had in this respect a very difficult task. The causes of former mischiefs, which have been already stated and explained, were first to be eradicated, and then the proper measures were to be taken for securing future felicity. The king had both in view from the moment he was seated on the throne; and for effecting these he had some capital advantages, which were wanting to most of his predecessors. He was in the flower of his age, had an excellent disposition, as being not either impetuous or indolent; much experience, and a high reputation. He had also very able men about him, in whom he confided; and who concurred with him in these salutary views. There was, more especially at the time of his accession, a cordial reconciliation between the heads of the York and Lancaster factions, and the people in general were so fatigued, distressed and exhausted with the miseries of a civil war, that they were generally desirous of quiet.

The great power of the barons had suffered some diminution, by the slaughters, attainders, and confiscations, in the five last reigns, and at the beginning of this. To prevent their growing up again, the king had recourse to silent unsuspected measures, which nevertheless were very secure. He facilitated by a law the methods already devised in Westminster-hall, for defeating perpetuities, by putting it into the power of the nobility to dispose of their estates.

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He made but few laws against retainers, because he found statutes sufficient for that purpose, ready made to his hands. But what their great weight and authority while the barons were in the plenitude of power, had hitherto rendered only a dead letter, the king gave life to by a strict and steady execution. He made them feel in all other respects the weight of the laws, when or in what manner soever they offended. Thus he brought Edward de la Pole earl of Suffolk to the bar, for killing a mean person, tho' that peer was of the royal blood; yet he pardoned him, that the severity of the law and the clemency of the prerogative might appear, in the same instance. Thus he fined John earl of Oxford, for having a number of retainers, that is, men wearing his liveries, and attached to his service, tho' not his menial servants; rejecting the excuse, that they were summoned only on his majesty's accepting an entertainment at the earl's house. But their privileges in parliament he never attempted to lessen, that they might themselves revere them the more highly; and upon many occasions, in respect to those who deserved well of the public, he gave them marks of confidence and favour. His uncle Jasper earl of Pembroke, he created duke of Bedford, and bestowed on him a great land estate. He restored the duke of Buckingham to his titles and fortune. He restored also the earl of Surry, whose father the duke of Norfolk fell, and who at Bosworth had himself fought

fought bravely, in support of king Richard. He soon after made him a privy counsellor, and at length lord high treasurer of England. The earl of Shrewsbury, who at the age of twenty behaved himself gallantly at Stoke-field, he honoured with the garter; and was very kind during his whole reign, to such noblemen as distinguished themselves in the service of their country. By these gentle steps he reconciled them to a just and dutiful regard for his authority, engaging them to place their grandeur in supporting the laws, and in living with a magnificence and hospitality suitable to their high quality.

In reference to the church, he acted with no less policy, making it a point to be well with the court of Rome; and deriving from thence such assistance as might strengthen his measures, in an age when strict obedience was paid to papal decrees. He was alike well with Innocent the Eighth, Alexander the Sixth, Pius the Third, and Julius the Second. He was, however, far from being a dupe to any of them; for, by gaining the agents that they sent over hither, he had always a perfect intelligence of every thing that passed in their courts, which enabled him to frustrate all the intrigues of his enemies in Italy. He raised and respected churchmen, at home; but then they were always men of merit. He took care that the rights of the crown should not suffer by his complaisance for the church. He caused the

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right of sanctuary, at Colnham in Oxfordshire, to be brought under the cognizance of the court of King's-bench, and upon a judgment of that court, that the claim of this place was invalid; he took out such as were sheltered there, and punished them according to their demerits. In respect to other sanctuaries, he procured the pope's bull, for restraining them. He passed a law, by which bishops were enabled to imprison lewd priests; and by another law, he restrained the benefit of clergy, so as not to be allowed twice. In a synod at London, some excellent canons were made for correcting the manners of the clergy; and, during his whole reign, he was extremely careful to prefer none but men of strict morals and pregnant abilities; yet he allowed them to preach freely against all vices, and when he was himself admonished, never shewed any sign of displeasure. If, as some have thought, he had really a secret design of entering upon a general reformation, as very possibly he had, no measures more proper could be taken, than to fill the high places in the church with men of true piety, sound parts, and known moderation: since such were most likely to afford him a right plan, and were the most able to have assisted him, in carrying it into execution, without scandal or severity.

In respect to the freedom of parliaments, this king deserved great praise; he called seven in the course of his reign; in all of which he asked their advice, and followed their opinions.

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In the first, there were very high debates; many members being returned to this, who had been attainted by former parliaments. These were the king's friends, but the judges declaring they ought not to take their seats till their attainders were reversed, they acquiesced. Many thought it hard to attain those, who by reason of their tenures, and perhaps unwillingly, had fought under king Richard, and therefore few names were inserted; and great modifications were made, to which the king did not object. He took likewise the recognition of his title, in their own words. In the second parliament, cardinal Morton opened freely the state of public affairs foreign and domestic, desired the advice of the commons with regard to the former, and intimated that as to the latter, good laws for promoting peace, removing oppression, and encouraging industry, were the most effectual means of making their constituents happy. In consequence of this, several good laws were passed. The third parliament was called, to increase the number of these; and whatever propositions wise and well-meaning patriots made, were willingly received, carefully digested, and speedily enacted. In the fourth parliament, the king spoke himself, in relation to the war with France. He obtained an aid by way of benevolence, that it might not bear hard upon the poorer sort of people. He wrote from Calais to the lord-mayor of London, that he had compelled the French king to buy a

peace. In his fifth parliament, the king passed that which lord Bacon calls a strange law, by which the subject was indemnified, who came into the field by the command of the prince, whatever the event of the war might be. The king, it seems, remembered what was the sense of the nation at his accession, and by this law declared himself of the same opinion. In the next parliament, he stated the causes of the war with Scotland, and passed several laws for the public good. In his last parliament, he declared the marriage of his daughter, and repaid the subsidy he received, by passing many popular statutes. The peers in his reign were about forty, and the commons about three hundred; and he derived no influence to himself, by innovating in respect to either.

In reference to the trade and commerce of his people he went unexpected lengths, as he perfectly understood, and at the same time had them sincerely at heart. He established right principles, and pursued them steadily. His constant endeavour was to promote industry, by removing all obstacles, introducing proper regulations, and providing that they should be attended with suitable encouragements. His laws were calculated to extend manufactures in general, and to improve all the manufactures that were already established. He took great pains to settle weights and measures, and finding the first statute for that purpose erroneous, amended it by a second. He fixed the standard
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of coin, and took care that plate should be of the same fineness. He removed obstructions in navigable rivers, and made the passage of the Severn free from duties. He took away the restraint, which the city of London had imposed upon its members, from carrying their goods and commodities to country fairs and markets; and made a salutary law, to hinder corporations from binding any of their members, till their acts were approved by the chancellor, the treasurer, the two chief justices, or the justices of assize.

He was attentive to give a due preference to his own subjects, in respect to foreign commerce, which had been in a great measure carried on by strangers settled in England; who, by the favour of the crown, being made denizens, were not content to save their own duties, but lent their names to cover other merchants goods. In order to prevent this, and to enable the English merchants to trade with some advantage in the commodities of their own country, a law was made, that left denizens charged with aliens duty; and another, by which all merchants were obliged to make their entries in their own names. Statutes, in those days when commerce was in its infancy, were necessary and acceptable. He lent a willing ear to all proposals, relative to this subject. It was no fault of his, that Christopher Columbus did not enter into his service; and it was owing to the encouragement he gave to the Cabots, that we have

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an undoubted title to NORTH-AMERICA, the discovery of which was incontestibly made by them. He lent his ships, when it was needful; he lent his money, when it was convenient, to merchants, and without interest. He fortified Portsmouth, and rendered it the station of his ships of war. He built the Great Henry, which was the first ship of the ROYAL NAVY, as it is now constituted, at the expence of fourteen thousand pounds. He exceeded all his predecessors, in providing for the benefit and security of his Subjects, by his treaties with foreign states. With this view he made a treaty of commerce with Francis duke of Bretagne, with the king of Denmark, for the security of our Iceland trade, then of the utmost consequence; with the republic of Florence, with Philip duke of Burgundy, with Charles the Eighth of France. Another treaty with Philip duke of Burgundy, more full and advantageous than the former; with the French king, Lewis the Twelfth; with the city of Riga, in Livonia; with Philip, archduke of Austria and duke of Burgundy; with the emperor Maximilian the First; and with Philip king of Castile.

There were likewise in this reign many excellent Statutes made for the public good, and for eradicating mischiefs that had long continued. Thus, hunting in the night, or in disguise, was made felony. Another law was made, against forcibly carrying away women. Before his time murder was not punished by indictment, till

after a year and a day allowed for an appeal, by which many offenders escaped. This was removed, by allowing the indictment immediately, and leaving the right of prosecuting the appeal, as it stood before. In order to punish idleness, vagabonds were set in the stocks, and the poor were directed to be sent to their own hundred, there to abide. Great care was taken, to prevent oppression of every kind. In order to this, sheriffs and justices were allowed to bail their prisoners, that men might not be confined upon bare complaints; and at every gaol delivery, sheriffs were to certify what prisoners were in their custody. For the relief of those who had rights, and were without means to obtain them, the law was made for suits in *forma pauperis*, which has been of infinite use to the unhappy. Provisions were made for the support of husbandry, and the encouragement of the YEOMANRY; which order of men the king, in a speech from the throne, declared to be the great strength of the nation. In the case of the isle of Wight, a law was made, to prevent more than one farm, of the value of ten marks per annum, from remaining in the possession of the same person; because of the situation of that island in respect to France, and the great danger of its being depopulated by this humour of engrossing lands, and converting tillage to grazing, which the king laboured zealously to suppress. Laws were also made against usury, as detrimental to society; for settling and recovering

ing wages, the labourer being worthy of his hire. Magistrates in general were obliged to do their duty; and the king made progresses through the kingdom, to see that the laws were put in execution, and that his subjects of all degrees reaped the full benefit of them.

These were the methods by which he wrought a wonderful change in the manners of his subjects; and, in consequence of this, an almost incredible alteration in the state of the kingdom. By suppressing every inducement, and removing every temptation to idleness, he diffused a spirit of activity through the whole mass of the people. By extending the arm of authority, in support of justice, he left none either above or below its reach; as a proof of which, he built and endowed the hospital of the Savoy, for the entertainment of such indigent people as came to seek relief from the courts of Westminster. By diffusing and protecting trade through all England and Ireland, and by extending his care to merchants concerns in foreign countries, together with that sobriety and frugality, which his own example and that of his court brought into fashion; he created such a balance of trade, as had never been seen in former times; the effects of which lasted long, and the same still longer. Leland and Camden, in their description of this country, speak fully to this point; mention the havock and devastation which the civil wars spread universally, and the revival of agriculture, the rebuilding public and

and private structures, the repairing and enlarging towns during his reign. But the most convincing proof that can be, is the immense sum of which he was possessed at his death; having actually more money in his coffers, than either he found, or his son left, in his whole dominions. The strongest proof of his sagacity, was the marrying his eldest daughter to the king of Scots, in prospect of that UNION, which has since taken place, and rendered GREAT-BRITAIN so formidable to its foes, and so invincible in itself.

After insisting so copiously upon this subject, in a manner not altogether, I hope, without instruction or entertainment, it is very indifferent to my view, whether the reader considers Henry in the light I, or in that in which many historians have placed him. It matters very little to the purpose, whether this monarch was profoundly wise and a sincere patriot, or whether he was only a subtle and selfish politician; having nothing but his own interests, and those of his family, at heart. It is very possible I may have erred as to his measures and motives; but as to the ends he reached, and the means he used, I cannot be mistaken; having the faith of history, and which is still of greater authority, the evidence of records, for all that has been advanced; and upon these I shall make only a few remarks. The first is, that like the other great kings of this country, he pursued mild methods, and did every thing by

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the advice, and with the concurrence of parliament; which great assembly he often called, proposed his own business and that of the nation perspicuously; and when they had done both in their own manner, dissolved them. My next, that he reformed numberless abuses, rectified errors of long standing, raised a new spirit in the people, saw the effects of it in his own time, and all this in less than twenty-four years; leaving the country and the nation he found desolate and distracted, in plenty and in peace. The last is, that he established the foundation of our present happy constitution, and laid it so deep and so strong, that tho' the superstructure has been often shaken, and in part subverted, yet the basis has ever remained firm; and that glorious and extensive edifice, which we now see erected thereon, owes its stability to those principles that he introduced, and to those practices which he revived and restored.

IX. His son, Henry the Eighth, succeeded to his dominions, with all the exterior circumstances of advantage, that a prince could have or wish. He was in the vigour of his youth, handsome in his person, of a robust constitution, quick parts, lively wit, with as much if not more learning than any prince of that time; magnanimous, brave, and, which commended him highly to his subjects, generous and magnificent. But, with these great and good qualities,

lities, he had many that were extremely bad. He was opiniative, impetuous, obstinate, cruel, luxurious, apt to receive ill impressions, which were very hardly, if ever, to be removed. Wolsey, whom he found in an ordinary station, grew suddenly high in his favour, and had quickly a seat at his council-board; where many of his father's old servants, introduced to the young king by his grandmother the countess of Richmond, still remained. These Wolsey soon rendered useless, by encouraging the king to follow his pleasures, and leave him to report the substance of their debates; which quickly disgusted the bishop of Winchester, and made several others weary of their station, which induced them to ask leave, and that was readily granted, to retire from court. This sole minister, these obstacles overcome, rose from an absolute devotion to the king's pleasure, to the very pinnacle of greatness; and was tumbled from thence, thro' his master's humour, who took up with this servant's servant, Thomas Cromwell; raised him yet more hastily to an envied height of authority, and having made use of him to destroy others without law, sacrificed him in like manner, and governed afterwards without a prime minister, but still in the same arbitrary way; his policy having ever a strong tincture of his passions.

He had as little resemblance to his father, in his method of rule, as in his temper or his manners; for tho' he sometimes caressed, and

often confided in his nobility, yet he was perpetually jealous of them ; and, in spite of signal as well as repeated services, not only took, but made opportunities, for oppressing them ; and in this, by stirring up factions, and extending his prerogative, till he had arrived at despotic power ; he found a constant compliance in the House of Lords, who gave a colour of law to sentences that received none from justice ; and, in the course of his reign, retaliated more than once upon the instruments of his iniquity, those acts of severity, by which they had enabled him, to destroy others. Like all princes of his disposition, he grew more suspicious and less tender of blood, as he advanced in years ; and, with a view of removing those dangers which his own conduct had excited, he in his last sickness brought the gallant earl of Surry to the block, to which he destined his venerable parent the duke of Norfolk, as thinking it improper they should survive him. But death prevented the stroke, and Providence protracted the life of the duke, till he saw how little all this bloody policy availed. For the new men, whom Henry raised to power and to the peerage, had as strong appetites to independancy as any of the ancient barons ; and being bred in such a school, as his court was, made no scruple of practising the lessons they had there learned, to the destruction of each other, and the most horrid oppression of the people.

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In respect to the Church and churchmen, he made use of both to serve his purposes, and then shewed little reverence or regard for either. He heaped so many preferments upon his creature Wolsey, that bishop Godwin affirms and assures us he was able to prove it, that the cardinal's revenue was greater, than if he had held all the bishopricks and deaneries in England, in that state to which they were reduced in his time. He taught his master how to suppress the lesser abbies, and Cromwell enabled him to suppress the rest; by which he added a ninth part of the landed property of England, to the domains of the crown; and, by destroying the buildings, squandering the goods, and making no provision for preserving the improvements, which were the works of the monks, rendered that a real loss to the public, which might have turned highly to its advantage, by the fallacious promises of which, this great change was brought about. It is true, to this prince we owe the Reformation; tho' it is doubtful, whether he intended it. But, at the same time, it cannot be denied, that from his manner of making it, the Reformation was rendered liable to those objections, which have been so serviceable to its enemies ever since; and which a prince of prudence, piety and humanity, might easily have avoided, and the loss of some advantages, which a monarch endowed with those qualities, would have as easily secured.

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In reference to parliaments, how they were treated by this monarch, and what sort of assemblies they were during his reign, the acts still remaining in our statute-book, to say nothing of those that are omitted, sufficiently declare. Our histories say, that he spared his subjects at the beginning, and spent for the first three years, out of the treasure which his father left him; but, if we may trust to the journal-book of his first parliament, in the first year of his reign, we shall find that they granted him a supply of two tenths and two fifteenths. He is said to have understood parliaments as well as any of his predecessors, which is a very smooth expression for his rendering them the mere instruments of his will. Sometimes he cajoled, at others he threatened them. He sometimes levied money without their authority, sometimes he raised money by loans on his privy seal, and then got himself discharged of those debts by authority of parliament. In some parliaments, the House of Commons was in a manner filled with his servants; who, in doing his business did their own, and received in boons a great part of the wealth they so liberally bestowed upon him by their votes. It is no wonder therefore, that he was unwilling to part with these complying parliaments, one of which sat eight sessions, that is, from the twentieth to the twenty-seventh of his reign. He likewise increased the number of the House of Commons; and, in a word, practised every mode

of influencing those assemblies, that either himself or his arbitrary ministers could devise. He made a much more honourable figure in the conduct of foreign affairs, tho' even in respect to these he obliged his parliaments to sanctify all his measures, and purchased that glory which extended over all Europe, at the expence of the blood and treasure of his subjects.

His two cardinals Bambridge and Wolsey led him into his first war, against the crown of France, under a notion of being Protector of the Holy See. But all the advantage he drew from it, was the reputation of having a needy emperor in his pay, and for taking up his pen as well as sword in the papal quarrel the title of Defender of the Faith. He came out of this, and indeed out of all his wars, with honour; but that honour was much too dearly bought. He had some notion of the balance of power, as appears from the reasons he gave for more than once changing sides. But then he created the necessity of doing this, by aggrandizing his allies till they became formidable, and consequently ingrateful. In short, his motto was his maxim, *cui adhaereo praest*, that is, the side I take shall prevail; which kept him in continual action, put the nation to an enormous charge, and procured no solid much less any adequate advantages. It is true, that he fortified his coasts, improved his navy, maintained the kingdom ever in a posture of defence, and was extremely

tremely respected, or rather feared by his neighbours. In his treaties he took care of commerce, and was willing enough to pass good laws, when they were offered him. But his parliaments were seldom of a complexion to think much of these, and he had commonly so many turns of his own to serve, that they had very rarely leisure to attend to what might benefit their constituents, and which was their proper business.

The same principle he avowed in regard to his conduct abroad, influenced all his measures at home, his subjects had no law, and himself no rule of action; but his will, influenced too often by passion, and sometimes by caprice. By loading his people with heavy and continual taxes, he deprived them of the means of improving their lands; and therefore the laws he made for the encouraging and enforcing tillage, were ineffectual, for there must be a probability of profit to excite industry, which suffered considerably by the suppression of monasteries; for tho' the monks did little themselves, they directed and promoted the labours of others; whereas such as begged their estates, cut down the woods and turned every thing into grazing, that it might yield them an immediate and certain income, and be managed by the fewer hands. The merchants of the Steel-yard had his countenance, because upon occasion he was supplied by them with money, of which his subjects complained to no purpose; tho' in respect

respect to manufactures he revived the old laws, upon an insurrection in the city of London. He saw with regret that depopulation, which his own errors in government had occasioned, and laboured to remove it, by building several stately palaces, which influenced the nobility to follow his example. However, while these fine houses were erecting, cities and great towns were decaying ; and we need only to look into Lambarde's account of Canterbury, in order to discern what mischiefs ensued from the private views of men in power, and that spirit of plunder which then prevailed. But the most obvious distemper of the state in his time, was an extreme scarcity of money, arising from the vast expence of his foreign wars, the national commerce falling into the hands of foreigners, and the small security men had for preserving their property, if it was apparent. To help this, according to the natural spirit of his system, which required, that whatever was done should be done at once ; instead of devising the means to bring in specie, he contrived to multiply the little that was left, by first raising the value, and then debasing the quality of his coin ; which, instead of palliating, aggravated the evil. Thus, through a long reign, he seemed to endeavour, tho' it was far from being his intention, to resolve into its primitive chaos, that regular system, which had cost his father so much thought and so much pains to establish.

These facts have obliged the noble historian, who has so carefully and so elegantly written the history of this reign, to acknowledge that the conduct of Henry the Seventh was far superior to that of Henry the Eighth; and that in comparison with the magnificence and profusion of the latter, the parsimony of the former ought to be accounted a royal virtue. Indeed two reigns were never more circumstantially contrasted, than those of the father and the son. The former having overcome all difficulties with his sword, sought to establish tranquillity at home and puissance abroad, by restoring harmony and establishing order amongst his subjects, in which by suiting the means to his end he very happily succeeded; leaving the kingdom quiet, the crown at peace with its neighbours, and his exchequer full and in perfect order. The latter, after a stormy, troublesome life, in which he was the author of infinite calamities to Europe in general, to his subjects, and even to his children and nearest relations, died under great apprehensions, leaving behind him the succession embroiled, his successor an infant, religion unsettled, the crown deeply in debt, the court filled with faction, and the nation on the very brink of ruin. Such was the state of this great country under a despotic prince, self-interested ministers, and obsequious parliaments!

XIII. It is a weak conceit, into which even the wisest princes have often fallen, that they shall be able to rule after they are dead, and to prescribe laws to posterity, by their last wills. Henry bestowed great pains about his, the main end of which was frustrated, before he was well laid in his grave ; and that division of power, upon which he relied for the tranquillity of Edward the Sixth's minority, was presently taken away by the creation of the young king's uncle the earl of Hertford, duke of Somerset, and his assuming the office of protector. Upon this ensued a war, highly detrimental to Britain ; as it exhausted the English exchequer, which the old king left in no very good condition, and ruined Scotland, without bringing that point to bear, for which it was made. The composing all differences, more especially those relating to religion, redressing public grievances of which there were many, restoring the coin to its former purity, a frugal administration, avoiding all intestine disputes, declining if possible all foreign quarrels, in order to have brought the kingdom into a peaceable and prosperous state, by the time the king, who at his accession was but nine years of age, should have been in a condition to have taken the management of affairs into his own hands, was apparently the plan that ought to have been pursued. The measures that actually took place, were almost in every respect, directly con-

trary ; and all this happened from the attention that the great men had to their particular and private interests, to which that of the public was continually sacrificed, and the laws too frequently altered grew thereby little respected, a thing equally fatal to the authority of the crown, and to the welfare of the subject, which must ever rest upon the same basis.

The Protector, by taking that title and the power which he understood to be annexed to it, lost in security much more than he acquired in greatness. For having shewn thereby what might be done in a minority, factions naturally ensued ; and his own brother, whom he had advanced to the title of Lord Sudley, and the office of High Admiral, began to think, that tho' he had gained much, he might, being both an active and an able man, attain more. The earl of Warwick, who was as ambitious as either, saw his road to supreme power absolutely blocked up, unless he could remove both. The quarrel between the two brothers rendered this practicable. The Protector procured the attainder of the Admiral, and the earl of Warwick having first forced him to descend from his high office, and, which was worse, to confess himself unworthy of it ; next ensnared him in an ill-laid design against himself, for which, tho' acquitted of treason, he brought him to the block. He held his high title of duke of Northumberland, the great offices and

the immense fortune which he drew from the grace of the young king, but for a very short space; and having, upon that monarch's demise, involved them in a scene of crimes and confusion, brought the like calamities upon himself and his adherents, by his arts; which had overwhelmed the duke of Somerset and those who had been attached to him, through his malice.

The Grandees struggled with each other for power; but even while they were doing this, they could occasionally fall in with each other, in order to aggrandize their estates at the expence of the Church, in which they were assisted by some of the clergy, who are rarely fortunate when they meddle with affairs of state; as we may have leave to say when we consider, that so honest a man as Cranmer could do so little good, and so little hinder the mischiefs that he deplored, notwithstanding that the king had, as he justly deserved, a much better opinion of him than of any of his ministers. Reformation and the suppressing superstition, were the causes assigned for the granting to the crown, lands, that with a pious intention at least, had been devoted by their lawful owners to certain purposes; and therefore ought, when these purposes appeared improper, to have been secured to the public, and this in granting them to the crown was pretended. But it was pretended only; for the far greatest part of them were quickly granted away, and became private estates,

estates, instead of being employed in erecting public schools or for the support of the indigent, the number of which was daily increased by the subversion of charitable endowments. This, how much soever it might enrich, rendered even the most potent courtiers unpopular in their prosperity, and in their adversity unpitied; for such is the price that men must pay, who prefer profit to principle.

When an ill custom is once established, it is not easy even for well-meaning men to break through it; and this therefore might be one reason why the Protector followed the precedents of the late reign, in gratifying the members of the House of Commons with considerable estates, out of the lands which they granted to the crown. Having thus secured them in a great measure to his interest, he continued them by repeated prorogations, as being unwilling to part with an assembly, upon whom he could so much depend. By this influence he procured the attainder of his brother to pass, tho' not so easily as in the House of Lords, and this without allowing him to speak for himself; tho' in another bill of pains and penalties, the same House of Commons positively refused to pass it, without hearing the prisoner in his own defence, in which they were much to be commended. It was very probably, his sense of their attachment to the Protector, that induced the duke of Northumberland not to trust his fate to a bill of attainder, but to procure his
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conviction by the House of Lords of felony ; where, tho' clearly a party, he sat and voted as a judge. This ambitious duke began his administration with calling a new parliament, previous to which the king's letters were directed to all sheriffs, requiring them and other officers to respect in their returns, the recommendations sent them by his privy council ; and, not content with this, letters were written by the king himself, at least in his name, in support of many persons. All this appears from undoubted evidence, produced by Strype ; and tho' this parliament, was thus modelled, and acted in some things as Northumberland expected, yet he seems to have been so diffident of them that he caused them to be dissolved, after they had sat only a month. This was the last parliament in that reign ; yet it is very likely, if the king had lived, Northumberland would have taken such measures as to have met with fewer difficulties in the next ; since the new principality he was erecting, in virtue of his grant of the best part of the bishopric of Durham, would have given him a great command in the Northern parts. But the king's death broke all his schemes whatever they were, and saved the nation from any farther oppression, by a combination of grandees, who were intent only upon increasing their own power and property, and augmenting the number of their creatures. Some few good consequences, however, followed from the gratifying the members

bers with estates in land ; for this induced them to pass some good laws for their own security ; and from the same motive, they repealed most of the dangerous acts that had been made in the last reign, and even to qualify that statute, by which a kind of arbitrary power was vested in the king, since he was at liberty, when of full age, to annul any laws made during his minority, by his letters patents. This they left him at liberty to do, with respect to the future operation of such laws ; but then, this was to be without prejudice to any thing that might have been done in consequence of them, from the time they were enacted by the legislative, till they should be thus annulled by the royal authority.

The large landed estates that came thus into the hands of potent lords and active commoners, were usually inclosed, and turned into pasture ; by which multitudes of people lost their livelihood. This, joined to the debasing the coin, by which the price of every thing was apparently augmented, created universal discontent ; and, in consequence of this, popular insurrections in half the counties of England. The bad examples of those in power had, as it ever will have, the most pernicious consequences. Corruption appeared every where. The king was intolerably cheated in his revenues ; the very officers of the Mint seeing the coin debased, from a notion of bringing advantage to the crown, took the liberty of debasing it farther,

ther, for their own profit. The bishops, finding themselves compelled to grant away manors from their sees to courtiers, took the liberty of making leases for the benefit of their families. In a word, never was there greater dissolution of manners, at which we may the less wonder when we are informed, that bribery invaded the seats of justice, and all this old Latimer boldly told the young king in his sermons, which afford at once the truest and the blackest picture of those times. In the midst of these misfortunes our foreign commerce flourished, and this was in a great measure owing to the personal protection of the young king, who countenanced discoveries, and cancelled the privileges of the merchants of the Steel-yard, who having or pretending to have, an exemption from new duties, were thereby enabled to carry on trade, by underselling the merchant-adventurers, who consequently recovered their own birth-right by getting their charter declared void. This decision was in the spirit of his grandfather; but his ministers, from political maxims, caused its operations to be suspended.

This reign, so full of tragical events, continued somewhat less than six years and an half; during which, there were two wars; the first against Scotland, which brought honour but no profit, and by destroying utterly the commerce and shipping of that country rendered it of less value, when half a century after it came to be united to England. The latter, brought

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not either honour or profit. At the peace, indeed, Boulogne was sold to the French, which was the last conquest made by Henry the Eighth. At the demise of the king the crown was indebted two hundred and fifty thousand pounds, and this notwithstanding the augmentations that had been made by parliamentary grants of church lands, the usual grants for life, several occasional supplies, and the sums gained by the coinage ; as to which it may not be amiss to remark, that his worst money contained no more silver in three pounds ten shillings, than there is in three of our crown pieces. It was to balance this, that landed men raised their estates to three and four times their rent, and necessities likewise rose ; but the poor could not raise their labour. Towards the end of his reign however, this flagrant evil was corrected. Part of the debt was due to foreigners, and for this the king paid an interest from seven to ten per cent. which was a very heavy burden, considering that the expences of his household one year with another did not amount to quite sixty-five thousand pounds. At his accession, his people were elated with joy ; whereas his demise filled them with sorrow, apprehensions, and discontent.

This reign shews us what this nation has to expect from an oligarchy, when a few potent families govern in the name of a king. These grandees, as they had great property, affected the state of the old barons, took out licences
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for keeping retainers, and so each of them had what was called his *Power*, that is, a number of armed men in their service, and at their devotion. When one considers these facts, it is impossible not to discern in how dangerous a state even the greatest of these great men stood, and how little either of peace or security was left to the people. The yeomanry, so much cherished by Henry the Seventh, were now every where suppressed, and indeed almost extinguished; and this it was that gave birth to so many insurrections, as the same causes will ever produce the same effects; and Kett, the tanner, who raised the clowns in Norfolk, was the apparent successor of Wat Tyler, in the reign of Richard the Second; and Jack Cade, in that of Henry the Sixth; for when rulers forget their charge, and remember only themselves, it is natural for the people, who feel the distress this creates, to forget their duty. All which serves to confirm Henry the Seventh's maxim, "That
 " the man who had something to do, and did
 " it, was a profitable member to the state;
 " and that he who had somewhat to lose,
 " was likely to prove a good subject." In a well ordered state, the LAW to every one is alike the rule of action; none are therein so great, as to trespass with impunity; none so mean, as to suffer oppression, without knowing where to seek, or how to obtain relief. But when ambitious persons grasp at exorbitant power, they transgress, and thereby disgrace the

laws ; which at first amazes, but quickly emboldens the populace to follow their example ; and the legal fence thus broken, every man beats out a path for himself, and thus, if the metaphor may be allowed, the land that before from its being well inclosed was fruitful, fair, and well cultivated, quickly becomes a common, barren, wild and waste.

This, Northumberland and his associates felt, to their cost. They mistook the servile submission of a dejected people, for a placid obedience ; and having thriven under a shadow of a king, thought to go on thriving, under the phantom of a queen. But they were miserably deceived. The old nobility, whom Henry (such was his politics) had laboured to suppress, remained firm to his daughter, and the respect due to an act of parliament invited the people to follow them. Thus, Mary succeeded, whose short tumultuous reign was full of evils and misfortunes. Her first parliament, swayed by the royal authority, restored popery. The next, influenced by Spanish gold, consented to a foreign marriage, that involved us in a war against France, and against our interests ; by which we lost Calais, and that broke the queen's heart ; who, left almost every old mischief unremedied, induced a train of new misfortunes, and brought this nation, tho' not intentionally, to the very brink of ruin.

XIV. THESE, and other dark clouds from almost every quarter, overcast the dawn of Elizabeth's government; who may be truly said, to have found this country in the lowest state, and in the most distressed condition to which it was ever reduced, except at the accession of Henry VII. who was forced to fight his way to that throne, which his granddaughter peaceably possessed. The disorder was not only general, but seemed in all, and more especially in the most material branches, inveterate and past remedy. Religion was not barely unsettled, but both sides equally inflamed; the Papists in possession, the Protestants provoked by the smart of a persecution, equally antichristian and intolerable. There was little less acrimony between the parties in the state; those who had served queen Mary, pleaded their loyalty to the crown; and the malecontents in that reign, esteemed it a merit in this. Public spirit was almost extinguished, through want of exercise and encouragement; and yet it was visible, that without this, not only endeavours but hopes were vain; since upon its revival public safety depended, of which till her accession those had the least hopes who wished it most. The power of the crown was sunk; and, which was much worse, the abilities of the people. The navy was absolutely ruined, and so were our fortresses; which were then necessary, as we had no strength to protect, and our enemies frequently

quently insulted our coasts. In such a state, our commerce must of necessity be precarious, which suffered exceedingly likewise from the loss of Calais : a loss, which in popular opinion, was not to be either recovered or repaired. The royal revenue was at best slender ; and, as things stood, very precarious. There was a heavy debt due to foreigners, and at high interest ; and what aggravated all these calamities was the wretched condition of the coin, which in the latter end of king Edward's reign had received a small amendment ; but which, in the last reign, tho' the ministry were well inclined, they durst hardly attempt. Besides all this, the kingdom was in a great confusion. Mens hopes and fears were alive, in respect to their private interests ; but cold and dead, with regard to the public ; that is, they loved themselves, hated their neighbours, and despaired of the commonwealth. Abroad, there was an unsuccessful expensive war, in which we had suffered much, were likely to suffer more, and which, thro' a strange as well as singular circumstance, we were less afraid of the superior power of our open enemy, than of the perfidy of our only ally, who had still a great party in this nation, of which he had been so lately king. This, however coarsely drawn, is a true picture of the English affairs at Elizabeth's accession, and a picture worthy being attentively considered.

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The queen was young, and without experience; but she had been bred in a good school, that of affliction, and conceived perhaps the more truly of a court, by having considered it only at a distance. She had a solid judgment, much discretion, and a very pleasing behaviour. She afforded her countenance to many, her confidence only to a few. She preserved such of her sister's counsellors as she knew were of ductile tempers, and most conversant in business; she added to these a small number of her own friends, so that the majority was apparently in favour of the old court, but in reality well disposed to the service of the new. At the head of these was the Nestor of English statesmen, the marquis of Winchester, Lord High-Treasurer; who having held his credit in three reigns, found himself equally caressed in the fourth. He avowed it as his maxim, that in stormy times a willow was safer than an oak. His advices were ever moderate, with whatever party he sided, and he went into the violences of none. This rendered him extremely popular, and he did the queen's business in his mild way. There was no time to be lost, and yet nothing could be done in a hurry. The National Religion was silently and peaceably changed, and that form of Church-government settled, which had prevailed in the reign of her brother. Hopes were given to all parties, but preferments were the reward only of public spirit. The navy was quickly restored, and the fortresses

tresses on the sea-coast repaired. An enquiry was made into the loss of Calais; to satisfy the people, two officers were convicted and condemned, for being wanting in their duty; but the queen's purpose being thus answered, neither of them suffered. All imaginable protection was given to trade, and the revenue being regularly collected and frugally expended, the interest of the crown debt was punctually paid, till by degrees it could be absolutely discharged. The state of the coin was thoroughly examined, and wholly rectified upon mature deliberation, the queen taking the loss upon herself. These measures not only revived the spirits, but roused the courage of the nation; tho' the queen thought it best to temporize with Philip the Second, till she had made a separate peace with France, and was thereby in a condition to resume her independency, as indeed she did, much sooner than he expected. In the space of three years most of these great things were accomplished; which not only her own subjects saw with surprize, but the other powers of Europe; who now beheld with respect, a state, which they had so lately contemned.

Elizabeth had not a little of her grandfather's temper, and in this consisted her best qualities; those that recommended her most to her subjects, contributed chiefly to the success of her designs; which was in truth wonderful, and have so highly raised her reputation with posterity; who in that respect have been much more

more just to her than to him. Amongst these happy circumstances, in regard to her royal disposition, we may from the testimony of facts, which seldom deceive and never flatter, reckon these. She was ready to receive advice, and knew well how to distinguish the counsels that were given her. She kept and protected her ministers, in spite of the clamours of the crowd, or the intrigues of the court; to both of which they were enough exposed. This appears from Sir Nicholas Bacon, Lord Burleigh, Lord Chancellor Hatton, Sir Francis Walsingham, Sir Nicholas Throgmorton, and many others, who lived and died in her service. She was steady in her conduct, and not to be diverted from her purposes by any difficulties that were suggested, or unforeseen obstacles that she met with. She was a great œconomist, as appears from her civil list, which shews that she maintained the dignity and state of a queen (in which few princes have exceeded her) at an expence so small, that it is hardly credible, and this that she might keep her coffers full, and not be compelled on every exigency to demand aid from her subjects. In this she succeeded so well, that Sir Robert Cotton assures us, before she entered into her wars, she had seven hundred thousand pounds in her treasury. She was very unwilling to burden her people with taxes, and tho' strict or rather severe in collecting every branch of her own revenue, very gentle in levying parliamentary supplies. With all this attention

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and frugality she paid high interest regularly abroad, and borrowed afterwards of the city of London largely, by the means of Sir Thomas Gresham, on more moderate terms; sometimes not out of necessity, but from policy; that if money failed on any emergency, she might have a sure resource in an established credit. She encouraged, rewarded, and supported merit of every kind; and this not barely at the request, but sometimes in spite of her ministers; for which reason she was well served, and saw multitudes of able men, of her own raising, and wholly at her devotion. She judged incomparably well, and without any bias, of foreign affairs. She concluded alliances prudently, observed them punctually, and never grudged those vast remittances that were necessary to support her friends, distress her enemies, and keep danger at a distance.

But if she resembled her grandfather much, she resembled her father still more. Like him, she had a high and haughty spirit, that sometimes burst out with an heat and violence that were unbecoming her station; and, in respect to her sex, unseemly. She supported her favourites Leicester and Hatton, in actions repugnant to justice; of which, in other cases, she was commonly tender. She was sparing to some of her best servants, such as Sir Francis Walsingham, and Sir Nicholas Throgmorton; and occasionally peevish and harsh to them all, Leicester and Burleigh not excepted. She
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loved pomp and parade, but this was at her servants expence; to whom in town and country she made frequent, long, and costly visits; and from whom she made no scruple of receiving many and rich presents. She gave too much licence to her passions, and thereby lessened the respect, and perhaps lost the affection, of those who were exposed to these transports. She listened too readily (which was a family vice) to informations, upon penal statutes, concealments, or whatever else promised profit; and yet they very seldom paid the odium, with which they were attended. After her father's example, she made no conscience of despoiling the church, and tearing large manors from bishopricks, to gratify hungry favourites; by which great inequalities in the revenue were created, between those who in point of dignity and duty were equal, and this for the benefit of private persons, instead of augmenting the poor livings of the parochial clergy, and thereby removing all pretence for pluralities, which had been a public benefit. Like him, she looked with a jealous eye upon the ancient nobility, and sacrificed some of them under a colour of justice; countenancing a Machievelian policy, that seduced the unwary into criminal paths, and then cut them short, from the vain hopes of a security, which such methods could never establish. Above all, she was extremely fond of prerogative, and made use of it to very extraordinary purposes; from a desire of help-

ing herself, rather than stoop to ask the assistance of her subjects; and yet she derived from her mother a kind of popular complaisance, which she knew how to employ, more especially on public occasions, so as to preserve in a singular degree the affection of the Commons, and to remain through the course of her long reign, in the strictest sense of the phrase, the queen of her people.

These might have produced many bad consequences; some, no doubt, they did produce. But the strength of queen Elizabeth's government arose from its weakness at the beginning; and the singular felicity of her administration, from the succession of difficulties she had to struggle with; for these obliged her to keep close to those ministers whose parts and abilities she had experienced, made a steady and continual application to her affairs necessary, and in many instances laid a restraint upon her natural temper, which otherwise she might have indulged to the prejudice of her safety and reputation. The distresses she felt at her accession, have been already enumerated. To these immediately succeeded her disputes with France and Scotland. Upon these followed misunderstandings with the Spanish government, in the Low-Countries. Then, domestic disturbances, and a dangerous rebellion in the North. She was next forced into a war with Spain; and, in consequence of that, was obliged to undertake the protection of the States, the countenancing a pre-
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tender to the crown of Portugal, and the support of the king of Navarre in his just claim to the crown of France. When she had struggled through these, she found herself not less perplexed by the war in Ireland, in which Philip the Second copied her politics, in respect to the Netherlands. The tumult excited in her very capital by the earl of Essex, who had stood so high in her favour, gave her no small disquiet; and the methods she was obliged to take to secure her person and power against that attempt, was attended with consequences that affected her spirits deeply, and some say broke her heart.

In order to overcome so many obstacles, and this without laying excessive burdens upon her people, she had need of good advice. In order to obtain this, she first digested every affair of moment, with a few ministers who were most in her confidence; and having, by their assistance, reduced matters into order, she took the sense of her whole council upon them, before they were carried into execution, heard all objections patiently, and allowed a perfect freedom in debate. In her fleets and armies she gave commands to none, but men of clear courage and reputation; and if, as it often happened, these were men of very high quality, they were likewise men of distinguished merit. She had a great art in her discourses, as well as by her example, in exciting and inflaming public spirit; by which she lessened her expences very
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considerably, engaging many to raise forces, to fit out ships, as well as to expose their persons, at their own expence. She allowed very little relaxation to herself, her ministers, or her commanders; keeping them in a continual exercise, and thereby frustrating many cabals that might have proved prejudicial to herself, or to the public. Seldom profuse in praises, still more sparing in rewards; which heightened their value, when they were conferred. She took care to keep the greatest in awe, while by a real or well-dissembled complaisance for the common people she diffused a reverence and an affection for her person and government, through the mass of her subjects, in every corner of her dominions. By these methods she performed actions, that seemed almost incredible. She raised from the most low and distressed condition the States of the United Provinces, to whom the sums she advanced, amounted to a debt of eight hundred thousand pounds. It cost her half that sum to fix Henry the Fourth on the throne of France; who, when she first assisted him, was scarce master of more than Dieppe, and the country about it. She baffled the Invincible Armada, returned the insult intended by the invasion of Portugal, into which her forces marched one hundred miles, and returned with little loss; sacked Cadiz, and destroyed the remainder of the Spanish navy; and, having absolutely reduced Ireland, forced the Catholic king, whom from being
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the most potent she had brought to be the most distressed monarch in Europe, to beg a peace almost upon any terms.

In the course of this long reign of forty-four years, the circumstances of the nation were almost wholly changed, and changed for the better. The Protestant Religion was effectually settled, and the Church of England so thoroughly incorporated with the state, that both must subsist or be subverted together. The nobility were no longer formidable to the crown, or unamenable to the laws. The Commons recovered at least, in a great measure, their rights. Commerce extended itself; and, if the customs may be our guide, was near five times as great at the end of her reign as it was at the beginning. The English, in her reign, first surrounded the globe; and her war with Spain, carried her ships to every quarter of it. Manufactures flourished, many good laws were made; and, as all her successes, so even her distresses, were in some measure beneficial to the nation. She received in supplies, two millions eight hundred thousand pounds. On the other hand, she discharged debts to the amount of four millions; and supported a tedious and expensive war, which obliged her to sell not only jewels and other valuable things, but to dispose of one hundred thousand pounds *per annum* in crown lands, which became thereby private property. Besides this, she left a considerable debt, which was discharged by her successor;

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and, in order to form a better idea of the amazing œconomy of her government, it may not be amiss to observe, that she obliged the Catholic king to spend to the amount of very near our present public debt, in order to preserve the Ten Provinces, which compose the Austrian Netherlands. That some violent acts were committed, that there were many defects and some considerable errors in her government, is not to be denied. But these belong to History, and not to our Enquiry. Her parliaments were not always complaisant; they hesitated on the first extraordinary supply which she demanded, but she convinced them so clearly of the necessity for that grant, and made it so evident, that she had done more for the public than any of her predecessors; that they not only complied then, but never hesitated afterwards, which induced her successor to say in a speech from the throne, ‘That queen Elizabeth drew what she pleased from her subjects.’ Which will always be the case, when subjects are satisfied that their aids are not wasted, but well applied.

XV. IN the two succeeding reigns, there was almost a continual contest between the crown and the subject; or at least between the ministers of the crown and those who stiled themselves the friends of the people; and in these, as in almost all, and especially political disputes, there were great faults on both sides.

It would take up too much time, and is beside our purpose, to enter minutely into the causes of those dismal calamities that these differences brought on; and which, in their beginnings, certainly were not foreseen by either party. But it may not be amiss, however, to enumerate a few, and chiefly those that may be stiled new; as having no connexion with any that have been before mentioned, in treating of the disturbances that happened in other reigns.

In the first place then, we may reckon the instability of both princes tempers. King James was remarkably unsteady, and, by an affectation of superior wisdom, gave encouragement to flatterers; and, at the same time, excluded men of open tempers from offering him their advice, and which would have been of greater consequence, their assistance. Charles had a shew of obstinacy, and yet wanted firmness. He very often persisted in points, that had better been given up; and as often yielded, when it was too late; and when of course his condescension lessened his character, and in his affairs did him no good. Most of their ministers were men ambitious and avaritious, who having their own greatness only in view, and professing a warm zeal for the service of their prince, induced him to adopt those measures as requisite for his service; by which really, they meant only to aggrandize themselves. This engaged them to magnify the prerogative, not only in opposition to law, but to reason and common

sense. The season of prerogative was passed, because the nature of things and of men was changed. The nation was not only grown more wealthy, by improvements, manufactures, and commerce; but that wealth was also more generally dispersed, and as power follows property, the prerogative was virtually on the side of the people, as to their cost they found. These endeavours therefore, were in fact no better than kicking against the pricks; and the effects such as might have been expected, creating a dislike to monarchy, as well as making themselves odious. From the time that Buckingham came into favour, a dissolute spirit prevailed, than which nothing could be more detrimental. It is true, there was enough of this in the court of Elizabeth, and of a worse spirit, that of hypocrisy; but whatever there might be in their hearts, her favourites were obliged to act as if from principle and public spirit. With all these disadvantages, and after begging from their masters almost all they had to give, and then having recourse to vain projects, monopolies, licences, &c. there was no great wonder that the crown should be able to get very little from the people. The Commons, in Elizabeth's time, had asserted in plain terms, their right to give and to refuse; which right they exercised in these two reigns, and answered every demand of subsidies by remonstrances against the crown's ill management, and with instances of its prodigality. Wiser men would have

have made a better use of those prerogatives, which were undisputed, and observing that the essential parts of the feudal system were decayed and gone, would have sold those relicks, which being grievous to, were of course hated by the subjects in general, and that brought very little to the crown; as they might easily have done, at a very high price, which with moderate counsels and a few salutary laws devised by the ministers and recommended from the throne, would have once more restored the balance, procured a revenue suitable to the advanced expence of government, and effectually satisfied the minds and conciliated the affections of the people.

On the other hand, those who opposed, and in the end chiefly by the ill management of ministers in attending barely to their private interests, became a majority in parliament; were men of various dispositions, and very different intentions. Some were persons of great integrity, and real patriots, who were desirous of redressing grievances, and removing the causes of them. Others were malecontents, who thought themselves ill used by particular ministers, or had suffered by the Star-chamber, the High-commission court, the presidencies in the North, or in Wales, the Earl-marshal's court, or on account of loans or ship money, and who allowed their resentments to prevail even after these jurisdictions and grievances were abolished. Some again were governed by motives of interest, and the prospect of at-

taining to places and power, by making their importance and their abilities more conspicuous. Some were led by family and other connexions; or were carried away by the vehement oratory of the times, without at all suspecting what afterwards happened, and some there were of shattered and desperate fortunes, who concealing their want under high professions of principle, resolved to avail themselves of those troubles which they were so industrious to create. In short, in this, as in most civil confusions, the tempest began before it was expected; swelled and gathered strength by incidents that were not foreseen, and becoming at length irresistible, ruined not a few of those who repented too late. For, beyond all question, men of parts and probity, whatever dislike they might have to the court as it then stood, or however dissatisfied with the intemperate heat of some ecclesiastics, were far from desiring to subvert the constitution, or to have no establish'd form of religion; and had it not in their thoughts to level all degrees of people, and absolutely to destroy that system, under which their ancestors had acquired titles and estates, and themselves might have enjoyed the greatest happiness, if they had stopped in time.

When the civil war was over, and all power vested in the remains of that parliament by which it was begun, they evidently shewed that the nation in general were not like to be benefited by this amazing change. For tho' they

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carried on the Dutch war with great vigour and spirit, and did many other things that were truly commendable, yet in these they avowed the maxims of the two last reigns; and caused an English translation of Selden's Treatise on the dominion of the sea, and many of James and Charles's proclamations and letters, to be published by their authority to justify their conduct, without reflecting on the consequences. But what hurt them most, was their exorbitant acts of power; the large grants made to themselves, and the immense sums they levied upon the people. These proceedings having occasioned, as they naturally must, a general discontent, Cromwell who saw himself suspected easily gained the army, and then without resistance or commotion turned them out of doors. But, tho' he entered on power with facility, yet he held it with great difficulty; and, in order to hold it, made a very unnatural alliance with France, and a very impolitic war with Spain; upon which the effects of English merchants were seized to a prodigious amount in that kingdom, and the Dutch admitted to a share in that trade, which for many years we had ourselves, without rivals, to our great profit, enjoy'd. They likewise took this opportunity of possessing themselves of the Cape of Good Hope, and of those countries in North-America, now stiled New-York and the Jerseys. Besides all this, after much new modelling, the Protector at length met with a giving parliament, who
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settled one million three hundred thousand pounds upon him, for the support of the army, navy, and civil government ; which was much beyond the measure of former times, as his major-generals and high courts of justice exceeded every species of oppression that had been ever felt before.

Upon the deposition of Richard, and the small remnant of the old parliament resuming the reins of government by the assistance of a small part of the army, the bulk of the nation stood amazed, knew not which way to look, or whence to expect protection. They saw the crown-lands sold, as were also the estates of the Church ; and yet no public revenue settled, but what was from time to time drawn out of their pockets. The nobility were degraded, the universities new modelled, and the parliament, as it then stood, by no means a representative of the people. A general dissatisfaction and irresolution ensued, amongst all who were not united to those in power by the bonds of interest ; and many that were in employments, took the opportunity of providing for their private interests, at the expence of so precarious an establishment. This disjointed state of things put the considerate men of all parties upon contriving how to restore the ancient constitution ; the loss of which, they plainly saw, was detrimental to the nation ; and not like to be repaired by any of the new-fangled schemes of government, which were thrown out in those days,

days, when every man said and did what was right in his own eyes. But the great argument for returning to the old monarchical establishment, was drawn from the experience of its consistency, having held together for many ages; whereas three new governments had been formed and subverted in twelve years, and several mutations happened afterwards, within the space of as many weeks.

XVI. AT the return of Charles the Second, the nation in general were, with regard to political concerns, in a good disposition. Adversity had taught the courtiers discretion, and the people were glad to return to their old form of government, as experience had taught them, that amongst the many changes they had made, not one had been for the better. The spirit of party, was at that juncture buried in oblivion. There was a sincere desire of healing all divisions, and of settling the government on so broad a foundation, that the crown might have a competent revenue, and yet the subject have no just reason to complain. The then ministers were convinced, that prerogative was a broken reed; and that the only solid basis of power, was the public good-will. This being the case, the parliament proceeded willingly and speedily to the making of what they thought an effectual settlement upon the only proper principle, that of regulating the expence of the crown, in a due proportion to the income of the nation,

in order to which there were several things to be considered and adjusted.

The ancient methods of providing for the royal dignity, were interwoven with the feudal system; and as that was no longer to be relied upon for protection, it was necessary that a new mode should be introduced. Wards and liveries were grievances, to which none were again willing to submit; and therefore it was thought expedient to purchase these, by granting the king a more settled, and at the same time a less burdensome revenue. In fine, the necessary computations being made, it was determined, that the crown should have an annual income of one million two hundred thousand pounds; and, in order to raise this, they settled tunnage and poundage, or, as the modern term is, the customs; the temporary, and hereditary excise; the hearth-money, and some lesser funds, which, according to their estimate, would all together produce this sum; and all circumstances considered, this appeared to all reasonable people then, a very just and judicious measure.

At the same time, or at least very soon after they did this, they passed many good laws for quieting the minds, preserving the liberties, securing the properties, encouraging the industry, and promoting the commerce of the nation; which laws, as they were well intended, had so fortunate an effect, that for some years the public tranquillity was preserved, and the felicity of the nation universally acknowledged, in support

support of which the authority of Slingsby Bethell, Esq; might be produced, who, in point of capacity was a very good judge, and in respect to his sentiments, was an unexceptionable witness. We live now at such a distance from those times, that we may speak the truth freely, and without offence, which is the sole motive in the present case, as it is hoped will pretty plainly appear in the sequel.

It was not long, before the king found himself in straits, notwithstanding this parliamentary provision, for which many causes are assigned. It is said, that some of the funds did not bring in what they should have produced; that if the whole sum had come really neat into the treasury, it fell short of the necessary and unavoidable expences, by about two hundred thousand pounds a year; and, besides all this, the king had, since his return, contracted a great debt before this revenue was settled: Under these difficulties, the lord treasurer Southampton, who, from his office felt them most, suggested the sale of Dunkirk, for two reasons; the first was, that it would take away one half of the annual deficiency, as the charge of that garrison was grown up to one hundred thousand pounds a year; the other, that it would bring in a large sum of ready money; and upon this a resolution was taken, to sell it to France; and, after a long negociation managed by the lord chancellor Clarendon, with the count d'Estrades, it was actually sold for

five hundred thousand pounds. Thus we see what the effects of necessity produced, even when the crown was assisted by honest and able ministers, for such the treasurer and chancellor were, who yet ventured upon this bold step, rather than apply to parliament again, from a persuasion that it would prove impracticable to get a sufficient augmentation of the standing revenue to answer the crown's expence.

But, tho' they were good men, this beyond question was a bad measure. It was parting with a place, that had been acquired by the English arms; that the parliament would have united to the crown; and that tho' of little benefit to England, might be, as in fact it proved, infinitely detrimental to us, in the hands of the French king; a thing, which tho' they did not foresee, yet after they were long laid in their graves, their country felt, and indeed still feels. The only good that could result, from this ill-judged sale of so important a place, is the making a precedent, and setting up as it were a beacon, to warn all future administrations from venturing upon any act of the like kind, and to shew the danger of defective provisions, which cannot but be attended with great inconveniencies.

The unfortunate issue of the first Dutch war, occasioned by the burning of our ships at Chatham, the most fatal and ignominious disaster of that reign, was owing to the king's want of money to fit out a fleet. In order to

prevent the like misfortune in the second Dutch war, begun upon far different motives, and conducted by very different ministers, he had recourse to shutting up the exchequer. This consisted in applying to his own use, his own revenue as it came in, tho' before anticipated to bankers, to whom tallies were struck at a high interest; the payment of which tallies were suspended, which created a great clamour and a public distress. However, the king by letters patents assigned certain sums for the payment of interest upon the hereditary excise, and after the revolution this being adjudged a debt upon the crown, the parliament settled a fund for the payment of interest at three *per cent.* redeemable upon the payment of one moiety of the sum to the amount of 664,263*l.* and upon this BOTTOM all our public debts have been wound ever since.

But before we come to speak of the new method for raising money, it may not be amiss to discuss this point a little more particularly. King Charles, in the first Dutch war, borrowed very large sums of the bankers, for which he paid them eight *per cent.* not in consequence of any contract, for that they declined, probably because the legal interest was but six, and this they were supposed to pay to those who lodged money in their hands, which made the two *per cent.* advance appear the less unreasonable. But some who were in the king's confidence, and particularly Sir George Downing, who from

his long residence at the Hague was acquainted with the Dutch method of raising money at a low interest, thought that if the money was as justly paid in England, it might be had upon as easy terms here as in Holland. In order to effect this, he advised the king to consent in parliamentary grants to an appropriating clause, that is, when a sum of money was granted by the house of commons for a particular purpose, as for the payment of the army, the ordnance, or the fleet, it should be so appropriated by them as that the treasury could apply it to no other purpose whatever. Upon this appropriation he proposed to build his scheme of credit, which, as the reader may see in my lord Clarendon's last book, revolted the old ministers, who were rather inclined to pay high interest, than to alter the old method.

This left the king still in the hands of the bankers, who continued to advance him money when he wanted it; and at the entrance of the second Dutch war, he was indebted to them upwards of one million three hundred thousand pounds. When therefore he shut up the exchequer, that is, failed in his engagements to the bankers, who at the same time were laid open to their creditors, to whom they had given securities for the money they had lent the king; he was deceived into an opinion that the earl of Shaftesbury, to whom he gave the seals, would procure the bankers time, by granting injunctions to stay the suits that were brought
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against them, upon the supposed equity of their being privy to the loans made to the exchequer; and that by the capture of the Dutch Smyrna fleet he should be able to pay the debt, or by his signal success in the war should obtain such a supply from parliament as would enable him to discharge it. But he quickly found, he was alike mistaken, in all three expedients. The chancellor granted an injunction, unless cause was shewn at a future day; before that day came he saw his own danger, and refused to make it absolute. The Smyrna fleet escaped, through the private pique of one admiral to another; and the parliament were too much displeased with the war, to grant him the liberal supplies that he expected; and thus his whole scheme fell to the ground, and he was forced to charge the interest of this money upon his hereditary revenue.

But this was not all. His parliament was not only displeased with the war, but still more so with his method of raising money to support it. They then saw, that the security they had promised themselves from assigning a settled revenue to the crown, was by this method defeated; and therefore they had recourse to some warm resolutions, which had all the effect they expected, and put an end to this method of the ministers raising money by anticipations and assignments, which it certainly imported them very much to do; since otherwise, the possessor of the crown might have alienated what part
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he pleased of the established revenue ; and, which was still, if possible, a greater mischief, might avail himself of the sums thus raised to answer pernicious, that is to say, anti-constitutional purposes ; which, in justice to themselves and to their constituents, it became their duty effectually to prevent.

We have seen by this gradual examination of our history, whence public troubles arose ; and how the roots of them have been, partly by design and partly by accident, exterminated. The original power of the barons grew out of conquest ; and our kings supported this power, because, from the feudal constitution, it was the support of their own. By degrees it grew too strong to be controuled ; and then, by a wild exertion of its own force, having a little diminished it, Henry the Seventh by his policy reduced it within bounds. His son did the same thing by the clergy ; who, by having two sovereigns, one here, and one at Rome, were not upon a level with other subjects. The barons thus humbled, and the clergy thus reduced, it is no wonder that the power of the prerogative was so conspicuous during the reigns of the Tudors. It required however great management in the time of Elizabeth, whose frugality, and having no family of any kind to support, enabled her to make the expence of her government, easy to the people ; who, at the same time, were growing rich, and had thereby acquired a relish for liberty. The

error of relying upon prerogative in such a situation, and not discerning how the nation in such new circumstances were to be dealt with, brought on the long civil war, the miseries of which affecting in their turns all parties, instructed them at length in this salutary maxim, that government intending the good of all, is entitled to the support of all; and that the proportion of this support can be determined only by the good which government procures. Thus, after many chances and changes, and a painful passage through many disagreeable periods, the principles of true policy were more clearly taught by experience, than they had been ever defined in the schools.

XVII. THE situation of this country at the revolution was entirely new, with respect to its interior and exterior concerns, that is, considered by itself, and the relation in which it stood, in respect to the rest of Europe. The liberty of the subject had been acknowledged in the manner the most open and the most authentic, so that prerogative was not to be named, especially where ways and means were the topic. Yet the supporting this liberty was likely to be as expensive as the maintenance of prerogative, for which it was presumed it also brought its funds; but the business was, and indeed it was no easy business, to find these out. We were then to take a part, and a large part in the affairs of Europe, which required liberal supplies beyond

beyond what had ever been raised, and much beyond the measure of the impositions of those times, which, however, had not escaped censure. In a word, it was equally difficult to devise the method of raising money, or how to go on without it; and this it was, that set mens wits to work, which were in those days as sharp, as in these; and having also the example of Holland before their eyes, and the persuasion that if the first step was once taken, and the nation brought to raise money in a new way, in which the interest of private persons was promoted, while public purposes were answered, the grand obstacle would be overcome, and thenceforward they should have the assistance of persons acquainted with this method against those who were averse to it, chiefly from their being unacquainted with it.

The case of the bankers, which made still a very great noise as not being yet settled, made for them in one sense, and made no less strongly against them in another. It shewed plainly that money was not wanting, and indeed for the fourth part of a century commerce had been very extensive, and the immense sums of money coined within that space, plainly shewed, how much the balance was in our favour. But tho' there might be money, and tho' the propositions upon which it was to be obtained might be plausible, yet a variety of causes made it very difficult to procure. Some were averse to lend, others in that respect better disposed

disposed, could not be brought to see their own security; the very misfortune of the bankers and their creditors, made every one shy of lending on the revenue. Great pains were taken to shew the difference between the loans, or rather between the security upon the two loans. In respect to the former, they had the king's honour, and that of his ministers; in reference to the latter, the public faith; a visible security, and the engagement of parliament, that the terms proposed should be punctually complied with. But all this would never have done, if the offering a high interest had not overcome all obstacles, and tempted those who had money by them, or knew how to procure it, to venture upon public securities; and to risque a small fortune in order to raise a large one; in which their success was so certain and sudden, as to silence all unbelief.

There were, indeed, some other impediments in the setting out. The taxes were sometimes ill chosen; in consequence of which, they proved deficient; there were faults in the collection, securities upon remote funds fell under a discount; but, by degrees, experience and practice removed all these discouragements; and, in proportion as they were removed, public credit acquired a more perfect consistency; and he who had vested his money in the funds, was as much considered, as he who had a land estate. Things however were not brought into this situation, without some trouble, and some

inconveniencies ; instead of being amazed at which, we ought rather to be surpris'd, that they were so easily vanquish'd, and that the SYSTEM of CREDIT was so firmly and so quickly established as it was, and thereby made as stable and substantial a support of government, as land, industry, or commerce, which were ALL that had been known in former times. This, when we consider it in the general, taking in the consideration at the same time, of the space that it has subsisted, the weight that it has borne, and the shocks that it has stood, must appear very astonishing. But upon a closer application, and examining the fabric with steadiness and attention, we shall see, and it is a point of very great importance to see it, that PUBLIC CREDIT is very well, that is rationally founded, and has by degrees procur'd itself a very solid support.

The settling adequate funds, for the regular payment of the interest of such sums, as it was found necessary to borrow for the public service, created a new kind of permanent property, unknown in former ages, which had all the stability of land, the possessors of land having pledged their faith for its security ; and all the advantages of ready money, since it produced a regular and certain interest, while at the same time the principal might be commanded at pleasure. These circumstances rendered this species of property exceedingly convenient to very different ranks of people ; and, instead of
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of depreciating, raised the value of every other kind of property, while by associating such as became possessed of it, in the support of government, for their own interest, it created a new tie to the state, unthought of before; and therefore in proportion as it grew, its certainty and security grew with it; so that the high interest which was at first undoubtedly necessary to introduce it, became gradually less so; and upon this, as upon all other securities, it became practicable to borrow on more moderate terms, in proportion as its value was more thoroughly and more generally understood; and therefore it was not playing with words, but laying down a real fact, when it was said, That public credit produced its own support; for what is it that supports any thing, and every thing, but the sanction of the laws, and the persuasion that our private property, wherever vested, is as secure as the constitution?

If we consider it in this light, the public did in effect open a bank, into which private persons might throw their money, and have a certain interest punctually paid. But then, as this money did not rest there, but was issued by the public, in all the different ways that were requisite for its service, this occasioned a constant and a quick circulation; and as the conveniency of the funds drew money out of the hands of those, who would otherwise have kept it locked up in chests, so the employment of this money by the public enlivened trade and manu-

factures, augmented our commerce, extended our navigation, strengthened our colonies, supported our reputation throughout the whole world, and by enabling us to break the power of France, which threatned the independency of every other power in Europe, raised Great-Britain to a rank of reverence and respect, which she not only never had before, but which perhaps no nation ever had, and from an event so singular and so important, it is easy to apprehend that many advantageous consequences must necessarily ensue.

Amongst the first of these, was the great resort of industrious manufacturers from abroad, to which the revocation of the edict of Nantes, which happened a little before the revolution, and which drove a million and a quarter of the most valuable subjects in France, to seek their bread, and to carry their industry into other countries, did not a little contribute. To this we may add, the peculiar and distinguishing faculty of this nation, to improve every invention that is brought amongst us, which quickly spread, diversified, and extended these manufactures, and in a short time enabled us to supply those by whom our ancestors had been supplied with them. By such means, property was both increased and diffused, and at the same time freedom secured, being become as much the interest of the state, as the people. The success of our arms, and the need of our protection, procured us beneficial treaties of

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commerce abroad, and obliged the nations with whom they were made, to a strict and constant compliance with them. The growth of our plantations, not only supported the industry of our inhabitants at home, by taking immense quantities of our wrought goods, but furnished in return, prodigious supplies for foreign markets ; and the sense of all this, and the great security of their money placed out here, gradually gained us the confidence of strangers, who very prudently preferred the regular and sure payment of small dividends, to higher interest in their own country ; while the mighty privilege of being exempt from taxes, was amply compensated to the public, by those abatements, which from time to time have been made in interest, as well as by drawing from abroad such sums as were requisite to supply our occasions ; which, but for this extensive credit, could never have been accomplished.

It is not to be supposed, that all or even a great part of these advantages were originally foreseen, when we entered upon this new mode of raising money. Necessity first dictated the measure, and policy suggested the means, experience taught us to improve ; and the lights that have been derived from thence, have carried us much beyond what even the greatest masters in political skill, in the last age, could have thought practicable. But that these are really facts, and not fictions, devised to support
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an hypothesis, may be rendered evident, from truths of public notoriety, and consequences that admit of no dispute. For that our manufacturers are really multiplied and augmented, may appear by considering Mr. Fortrey's list of those with which we were furnished from abroad a century ago, that our way of living is far beyond the mode of former times, is evident to every one, who will take the pains of entering into the comparison; and is farther demonstrated, by the advanced price of annuities and places for life. We may add to this, all the circumstances of personal and family expence, furniture, plate, jewels, equipages. For tho' it may be true, that individuals run into excess and extravagance, yet this is at the expence of other individuals, and creditors as well as debtors make a part of the nation. That our buildings, gardens, and plantations for pleasure, are increased and increasing, is obvious to every observer.

These are all instances of national wealth, and instances that cannot possibly deceive us. With respect to the increase of our shipping and the extension of our commerce, the customs are very conclusive evidence; and in respect to our home consumption, the augmentation of the excise is an argument that admits of no reply. The same thing may be said, with regard to other taxes, the payment of which plainly attest, that the general circumstances of the people are much beyond what they formerly

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ly were; nor is it any objection to this, that our poor are very numerous, because where-ever manufactures abound, and many people are rich, this will be the necessary consequence.

But to apply this reasoning more closely to the point, and to shew that our credit has really and strictly speaking supported itself; let us consider that the great difficulties were felt at first, that eight and even ten *per cent.* was given for money; that this gradually decreased, notwithstanding the debt increased, so as to fall to six, to five, to four, and even to three *per cent.* which are facts not to be accounted for, upon any other principle. More especially when we remember, that all the instances before produced, of the increase of private property and national wealth, have happened within the very same period, and gradually made way for the devising new and increasing old taxes, to discharge the funds, that the extension of our credit rendered necessary; and which had been long ago impracticable, if the uses that have been made of this credit had not supplied us with the means, not of living only, but of thriving, under the weight of these taxes. Lastly, let us have leave to add, that the price of land, which is of all others the truest criterion, has been always rising; so that whatever errors there may have been, in the management of our expensive wars, or want of œconomy, in making proper reductions, during long intervals of peace, which are not to be
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extenuated or excused; yet so it is, that we are very far from being in a low or declining state, and much farther from being impoverished or undone.

XVIII. THESE advantages flowing from an extensive credit, sufficiently demonstrate, not only its utility, but also how essentially necessary it is, for us as a nation, ever to maintain and keep it. This we may assuredly do, with as much or more ease, than we obtained it. In order to this, the strictest punctuality is necessary; and this, tho' not the intention when it was instituted, is effectually provided for by the sinking fund, which in this respect has been, and is of the highest consequence, and has, no doubt, procured us many advantages, and preserved us from many inconveniencies, which we had otherwise missed, and is a resource peculiar to ourselves, unless perhaps some claim of this sort should be put in by the bank of St. George at Genoa. But there is still one thing wanting, to set our credit as far as human foresight can reach, beyond the power of accident; and that is, the keeping this credit within bounds. The not attending to this, we see frequently fatal in respect to individuals, and fatal even when they have not pushed their credit beyond their capitals; and as this may happen in respect to national as well as private credit, it merits our most serious attention, the rather, because public differs from private credit,

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in this, that instead of being affected, it must be visibly strengthened, by such an attention. Private men are often obliged to launch out, beyond their inclinations, in order to preserve their credit; whereas a nation has no shorter or better way to preserve it, than by retrenching.

The circumstances that attend our present situation, when tho' our credit is farther extended; it was never better established, should certainly suggest this, and put us upon thinking of the means of accomplishing so desirable an end, against that season shall approach, and surely it is now approaching, in which we may be able to accomplish it. When we first began to raise money in this way, we find by all the books, and there were not a few written upon the subject, that the great difficulty was to find money, whereas now the great difficulty is to find funds. There is nothing either wonderful or alarming in this. Every thing in nature has its limits, beyond which things cannot be pushed; and within which, it is prudent to keep. We are certainly not arrived at those limits, but perhaps we are within sight of them; and in all political concerns, it is much better to see too soon, than to feel too late. We may, no doubt, find still new funds, and of these, several have been mentioned; but this does not at all hinder, or take away the expediency of reflecting, on the means of freeing those which have been used already, the amount and the method of

collecting which are both known, and on which, in any future conjuncture we might the better reckon, if they were once free. We may add to this, that the very freeing them would be a new source of credit, for the reasons before mentioned, their certainty and their produce being experimentally known.

It was in this view, that the sinking fund was originally established, and this affords the clearest proof of the reasonableness of this proposition, for that was the work of those who perfectly understood credit; and if they saw the expediency of settling it then, how much more necessary would they have thought it now? If from the time of its first settlement, it had been strictly and invariably applied, we should have had so clear a fund of credit before this war opened, as in all probability had prevented it; and therefore this is the surest way of preventing another; and in order to do this effectually, we must try to multiply our sinking fund; that is, instead of one that arises from the accumulation of surpluses, we must endeavour to procure others, by œconomy and application. If men of suitable abilities and integrity were employed to look into and curtail our expences, they would most certainly entitle the public to very considerable savings. If other persons of like qualifications were separately to sift every branch of our revenue, they would, without doubt, render the public considerable gainers, by their improvements.

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If from these, or from any other and better methods, which probably may be contrived, a fund could be established for the payment of annuities upon lives, to persons resident in these kingdoms, and effectually guarded against frauds, a very large sum might be raised, that would free many of our funds; and thus both the manner and the effect of freeing them, would increase our credit. These principles are perspicuous, but they are nevertheless true; nor will they be found a jot the less certain, for being perfectly level to common sense, and clear to every understanding.

There is indeed an objection, that may be made to this. As to what may there not be objections made? And the objection is this: That tho' all may seem to be fair and reasonable in theory, and upon a general state of things, yet to men versed in these matters, and thoroughly acquainted with business, these will appear but mere visions. Now not to put this off, by saying as one justly might, that reason and experience are very seldom found to differ; we will try to go a little deeper, and to shew that these propositions are not only very rational in appearance, but very capable of being reduced to practice. In a limited revenue, no great savings are to be looked for; because in such a revenue, every thing is frequently and strictly looked into, and any errors that even could be detected, would amount to but very small sums. This, tho' true of a million or two in annual

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expence, will not hold as to twenty or more; for there if savings of any importance can be made in many, or in most of the capital departments, the total savings will be very considerable; especially to a nation, under our circumstances, where the saving of thirty or forty thousand pounds *per annum*, will pay the interest upon a million borrowed. The reader may find this placed still in a clearer light, if he consults Mr. Pepys's Memoirs of the Navy Royal of England, where he will see what a vast saving was made, in that branch of expence, through the difference of a prudent and an imprudent management, tho' no corruption either suspected or discovered.

In reference again to the collection of the revenue, that there may possibly be some improvements, and it may likewise happen some savings made therein, will look less improbable, if we reflect, that the revenue is now so much augmented as to make the charges of management bear a very high proportion, to the whole royal revenue at the time of the revolution, and consequently is very far from being a trivial object. It is by no means intended to suggest, that our taxes are ill laid, or collected at a high expence. On the contrary, they are in general much better contrived, than in almost any, and more cheaply collected than in most countries; yet considering their very large amount, and the different rates of collecting them in different branches, it is likely, that a proper enquiry

enquiry would not defeat the public expectation. A quarrel between lord Halifax and the earl of Rochester produced a very important discovery in the reign of King Charles the Second, through the sagacity of Sir Dudley North, after it had escaped not only the ordinary contralls, but the special examination of some penetrating judges. It is true, these are no conclusive arguments, but in a matter hitherto untried, candid and impartial judges will not expect better.

As to the annuities, if funds for them could be assigned, either by these methods or any other, new taxes only excepted, it is as manifest, as any thing can be, that they would not want purchasers; and peace once restored, upon very good terms for the public. For we know, that there are numbers here at home, desirous of having a certain income, for their own life, that they may live in their own way. It is not intended to enter into a vindication of this spirit; but since it is apparent that such a spirit there is, and which the freedom of our constitution will not allow us to suppress, the only way of making amends for it to the public, is to take such measures, and to offer annuities upon such terms, as that the public may have the benefit of it. But this is not all; for if foreigners were to be naturalized, in consequence of their purchasing such annuities, to a certain amount, and this would be highly reasonable if they resided in these kingdoms; very
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large sums and very useful people would be drawn hither, from abroad, and the benefits arising from thence, are so very evident, that it would be needless to insist upon them. These methods have been the rather pointed out, because if followed, tho' our debt would be gradually extinguishing, yet this would be done without lessening our circulation, which for many reasons ought to be attended to.

But whenever the season shall arrive, in which it may become practicable, to reduce our public debt, this must be done warily, gradually, and with much consideration; for as the ingenious and judicious Mr. Wood long ago observed, the sudden acquisition of such a sum in ready money, as would discharge all our debts, instead of proving a benefit, would throw the nation into confusion, by raising the price of provisions, and of course the price of labour, so high, that we should be able to carry on no trade, till this enormous mass of money being spent, we were again reduced to a level with our neighbours. It is industry, and not money, that is the wealth of a nation; and therefore the reducing debts and removing taxes, require to the full as much consideration, as the imposing them. The public creditors are in this respect entitled to all the condescension possible, and in freeing us from taxes, those are to be first taken away, that discourage industry, load our manufactures, and affect our commerce; for other taxes will not be grievous, and some

of them, as for instance, that on spirits, is no less beneficial to the community than to the revenue; and the same thing might be said of several other taxes, and should be said of all, that upon such a reduction were left, since in every imposition its effects, with regard to the welfare or the detriment of the nation, ought to be much more considered, than the money it will produce; and if this doctrine in regard to duties, was once thoroughly understood and practised, the people would not only thrive under, but even thrive by their taxes.

This putting the public debts into a train of reduction, would be beneficial to all ranks and degrees of people, and prejudicial to none. It would give the only sanction to our public credit, of which it yet stands in need. It would prove, that the public faith, in respect to its creditors is inviolable, and by augmenting the reputation of our credit, would raise the price of all our funds; so that the proprietors of them would have no reason to complain, as the discharge of a part, would not only increase the security, but likewise augment the value of the remainder; and, in case of future loans, place a stipulation for time, in the room of an augmentation of interest. This would operate favourably also upon foreigners; who, when they saw the certainty of the re-payment of the principal, joined to the punctuality of receiving their dividends, would be equally ready to purchase, and averse to withdrawing their money,

money, out of this country. It would have a happy operation in the encouragement of our manufactures and commerce, as at stated times it would throw great sums of money into the hands of those, who must themselves employ it in trade, or lend it to such as would employ it therein. Besides, by keeping down interest, which this would effectually do, private men would borrow upon cheaper terms, as well as with greater facility, and as these would enable merchants to extend every branch of their dealings, the consequences would be alike advantageous to the community, and to the revenue, and the incitements to industry, from a probability of thriving, be so much the greater.

The nature, the effects, and the benefits resulting from public credit, have been stated and supported from facts; it has been likewise shewn, that from the uses made of this credit, we derive that rank, that power, that influence we have over the affairs of Europe; and in which not only the grandeur, but the prosperity of Great-Britain principally consists. But then, as this very state creates jealousy and envy in other powers, it has been found impossible to preserve it, but by expensive wars carried on by land and sea in all parts of the world; and these wars growing, as in the very nature of things they must, every one more expensive than another. It is therefore as clear as any thing can be, that so long as we maintain this port,
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and keep up this figure, we must have a fund of credit. In respect to this, the method that has been offered seems to be the simplest and plainest, and upon trial also, will be found the easiest. We ought likewise to be encouraged to the making this trial, from the consideration of the manner in which our credit was originally created, in which new advantages appeared whenever any difficulty was overcome; which will certainly be the case likewise, whenever we set heartily about the redemption of our funds. The enquiries before recommended, will not only bring into full light many things, of which we have already competent ideas, but also many other things, of which we have now no conception. These discoveries will facilitate the progress of that great work, so that in a few years it will appear much easier than even those who are the best friends thereto, and at the same time the best judges of it, at this juncture apprehend. Besides, the repayments to the public creditors will have the same effects, in respect to circulation, in time of peace, that our great loans visibly have in time of war, and the nation in general will reap the advantages of them alike, in both seasons.

XIX. THERE may be a question of importance interposed, viz. after all our improvements, all our acquisitions, and all our success, is there no other method of supplying or sup-

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porting the exigencies of state, but by the use of credit? This certainly is a question very difficult in solution; and, perhaps after the most serious examination, would admit only of a dubious solution. But it requires no deep reach in politics to see, that the ventilating so perplexed a question, is by no means expedient at this time. What has been already said, is sufficient to shew, that the public has not suffered; but, on the contrary, has been gaining immensely, through that whole period, in which she has made use of credit; for which, tho' it has been hardly mentioned, there is a very plain, and to those who will allow themselves leisure to consider, and in consequence of that to understand it, a very convincing reason. The state, while it relies upon credit, finds immediate and constant employment for every man's wealth; and by affording him a security for, and an advantage in the employing it, takes away every temptation to hoarding and hiding, which, upon examination, will be found to be the true source of the ruin of most states; for, with regard to public as well as to private purposes, wealth locked up in chests, is as useless as if it still lay in the mines. The point then of real utility, is to shew, that notwithstanding its present extent, credit may be still employed for the service of the public, with safety and benefit to the public creditors.

There is nothing so potent as necessity. This, every man, in the course of his life, sees; and there

there are very few, so happy as not to feel. To the wise, necessity is no more than a spur; to the weak and wilful, it is a dagger, that strikes them with despair. But the prudent, when intrusted with the concerns of a nation pressed by necessity, either find or make an occasion, by which the mischief is avoided; and that which otherwise had proved a destroying tempest, passes like a brisk gale of wind, without any other effect than that of quickening the minds of the people, and thereby contributing to their being more attentive to the safety, and performing with more alacrity the service requisite on board the ship of state. Metaphors are no arguments, but they serve to explain those things, that arguments may afterwards enforce; and if they are in any degree dark, instances will let in light sufficient, to make their meaning evident, and justify their application.

Edward the First, and Edward the Third, had tedious and troublesome wars to manage upon the continent, which created a necessity of obtaining large supplies. They took occasion from hence, by new laws and wise institutions, to give a consistency to their domestic government, and thereby disposed the minds of their subjects to grant, and enabled them by giving encouragement to their industry, and adding security to their properties, to furnish them with money, and when that was not to be had, with credit for the support of their military

operations abroad. Henry the Seventh, saw the necessity of abating the power of the barons, and augmenting that of the middle sort of people, who were sincerely attached to him. He took occasion from the distresses they had suffered in the civil wars, to effect by laws, what never could have been effected by force. Henry the Eighth followed the same policy, with respect to the church. The prelates and the monks were grown exorbitantly rich, and this exposed them to the envy of the laity. Of this therefore he took advantage, and released himself and his successors from the trouble of contending with those who had a sovereign abroad as well as at home, and were sometimes able to wield the spiritual sword with such address as to defend themselves against the temporal power. At the restoration, the necessity of a stated revenue became apparent; and occasion being taken from thence, to sacrifice the useless relics of ancient prerogative, that settlement was agreed to. At the revolution, when the vast supplies that were requisite could be obtained no other way, occasion was taken from the exorbitant and threatening power of France, to enter upon that method of raising money, which, from its utility, has been in use ever since.

We will now endeavour to apply this doctrine; and, in order thereto, speak first as to the necessity. It may be presumed, that the public creditors having the public faith for
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their security, and adequate funds for the payment of their interest, would rest satisfied; and if there was no occasion for increasing our debts, there seems to be very little reason to doubt, that they would. But the exigencies of the public, visibly requiring a farther extension of credit, it seems equally expedient for the state and for the public creditors, that if it be practicable, this security of theirs should be put upon a better and broader bottom. By the methods that have been already mentioned, this may be done. A sinking fund strictly appropriated, and regularly applied, in time of peace, will gradually lessen the public debt; and nothing can be plainer, than that in proportion as this is lessened, our credit will increase. It may be said, that this will operate but slowly; perhaps when thoroughly considered, this will be found no very weighty objection. Besides, when it once begins to operate, its very operation will augment its force, either by increasing the fund, or by a wise release of such taxes as bear hard on industry and trade, which will have a like effect. It may be also said, that such an appropriation cannot be made immediately. To this the answer is not difficult. The settling and adjusting the new fund proposed, will require great application and serious enquiries; the very entering upon which, and an assurance that as soon as it is practicable, such a reduction of our debt shall take place, will have an immediate effect by

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putting an end to those apprehensions, which some well-meaning people may really have, and which some who mean not quite so well, may pretend to have. In short, this seems to be the only method of removing fears and exciting hopes; for what can encourage the people to pay their taxes chearfully, so much; as a certain tho' a distant prospect, that those taxes are not to be perpetual? add to this, that the first thoughts, more especially in regard to such complex subjects, are necessarily imperfect; and that there is good reason to expect, that when we once set about paying our debts in earnest, we shall experience the same fertility in expedients to discharge, as was found in contracting. The difficulty is indeed weighty, but public spirit is an engine of such power, as even the greatest difficulties cannot resist.

We come now to the occasion, than which surely a fairer never offered, and it is in few words, THE NEW REIGN. The character of our present king, the situation of our affairs, and the general disposition of his subjects, seem to promise success, to any undertaking that proceeds from the noble principle of public spirit, and has so salutary an end for its object as the public good. Those obstacles that have hitherto stood in the way, whenever any scheme of this sort has been proposed, are now in a great measure removed. The crown has now no private or particular views, inconsistent with the general interest; the feuds and animosities
which

which so long subsisted, and lent sometimes one colour, sometimes another, to the endeavours of different factions, to promote their own views at the expence of the common welfare, are now happily subsided; and there is no reason to suspect, can ever rear their heads again. But, that this may not seem a panegyric, or a vague and general representation, contrived to assist this hypothesis, of the possibility of supporting credit, by putting our debts in a train of reduction, it may be not improper to enter into a few particulars.

His Majesty, at the very moment he ascended the throne, shewed himself possessed of virtues, that reflected splendor on his diadem. The constitution called him to rule, and his inclination disposed him to be the father of all his people. A spirit of universal obedience prevailed, excited by an assurance of unlimited protection. This auspicious dawn of a benign government, has been followed by a series of prosperities; there has been no falling out, or falling off; jealousies and heart-burnings have given way, to a virtuous emulation; and the only contention that has been since known, is who should be foremost, not in professing only, but in discharging their duty. This unanimity the most precious gift that heaven can bestow, the choicest blessing that a nation can enjoy, has been the characteristic of his Majesty's reign; so evident that it cannot be denied, and so vigorous that it cannot but be lasting. This

is a felicity, exceeding even the most sanguine expectation. We had formerly heard of a coalition, we have now seen what is much better, an utter extinction of parties.

The first great act of our monarch's administration, was restoring freely to the PUBLIC, and for the use of the PUBLIC, the FUNDS that had been assigned for the support of the crown, and accepting a stated revenue in their stead. By this means, those FUNDS are in the hands of the legislature, who may take any method their wisdom shall suggest, for their improvement; and sure, if we may judge from other branches of the revenue, these are also capable of improvement. But, whatever improvements they may receive, whatever advantages may arise from them, beyond what they produced in former times, will accrue to the PUBLIC; and the amount of this, whatever it may be, will, considered in that light, deserve the title of a ROYAL SINKING FUND, as taking rise from a generous desire in a BRITISH KING to endear his COUNTRYMEN to his government, by showing that he meant to deal plainly with them, in the point of his expences; and that if any surplus should arise, that surplus should belong to the PUBLIC, instead of accruing to HIMSELF; an act truly worthy of a monarch, and which cannot fail of raising a due sense of gratitude in the minds of a free and generous tempered people.

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Another act, no less glorious, because no less worthy of a sublime and beneficent disposition, was the freeing the SEATS OF JUSTICE from the single circumstance of INFLUENCE over them, that could be exerted by the CROWN. This spontaneous kindness to his people, this divesting himself of a prerogative, and securing his subjects from the effects of it for ever, deserved that sincere applause and merited that universal approbation, with which it was received. By it, our constitution received the highest point of perfection, of which it is capable, in one of its most essential branches, and it was besides, so clear and so decisive a mark of the candour and integrity of the royal mind, from which it proceeded, as leaves us no room to doubt, that where-ever the royal power may be exerted, for the ease and benefit of the subject, it will never be expected in vain. A circumstance this, of the greatest importance, and which must be productive of effects, that will render both our sovereign and his subjects happy.

Thus it is shewn, that for carrying any rational plan for the benefit of this nation into execution, there cannot be hoped, or even wished, a fairer occasion, than is offered by the present reign. Under a prince, who has given such shining as well as indubitable marks, of public spirit, distinguished love for his people, and a sincere sense of the sacred nature of justice, we may certainly promise ourselves, that

whatever attempts are made for the benefit or the relief of the nation, will be considered as marks of duty, to the crown; and that, if under our present sovereign, we are not the **FREEST, HAPPIEST, and GREATEST Nation in EUROPE**, the fault must lie in **OURSELVES**.

P T N I S



